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Spring 88

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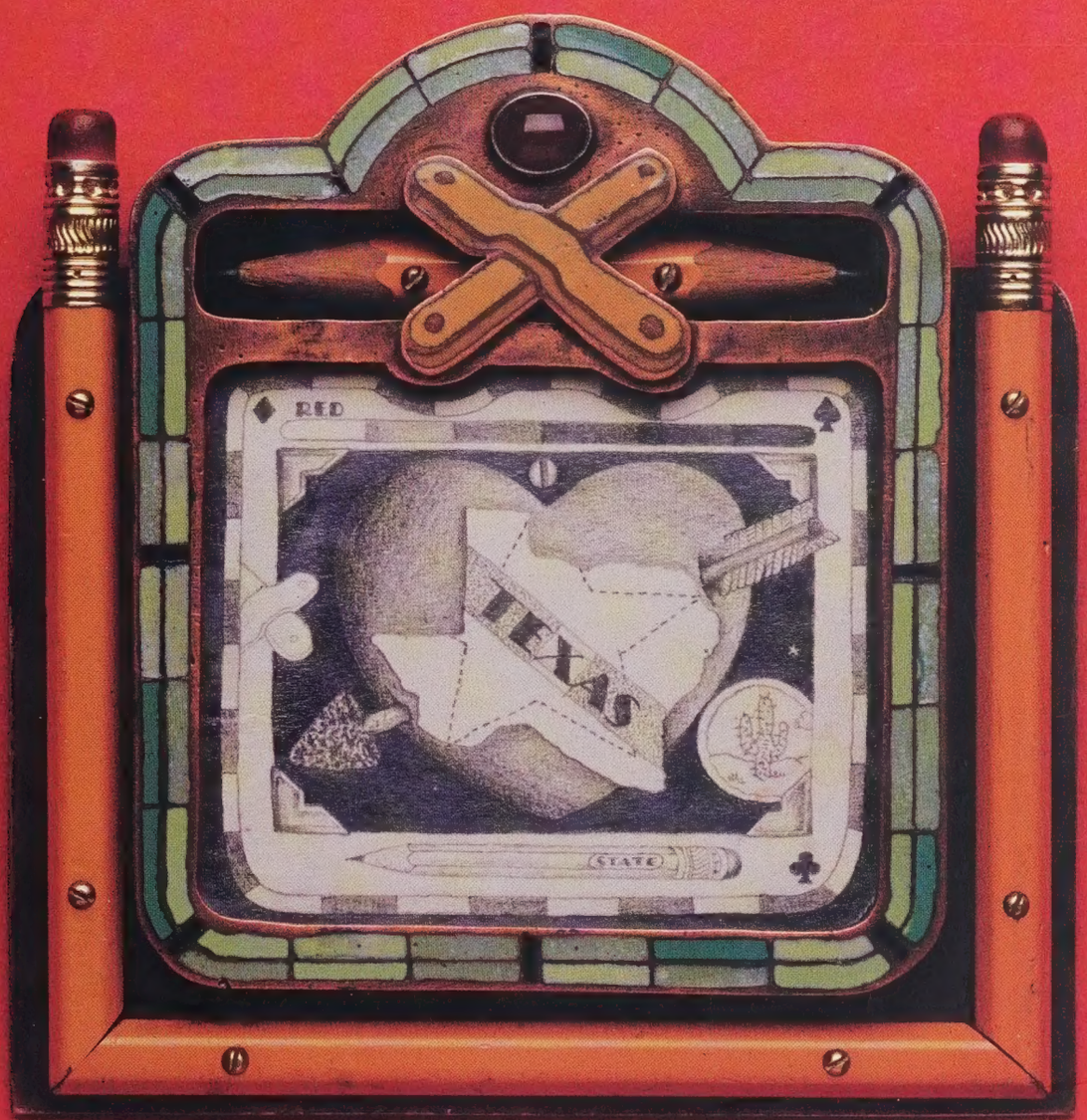

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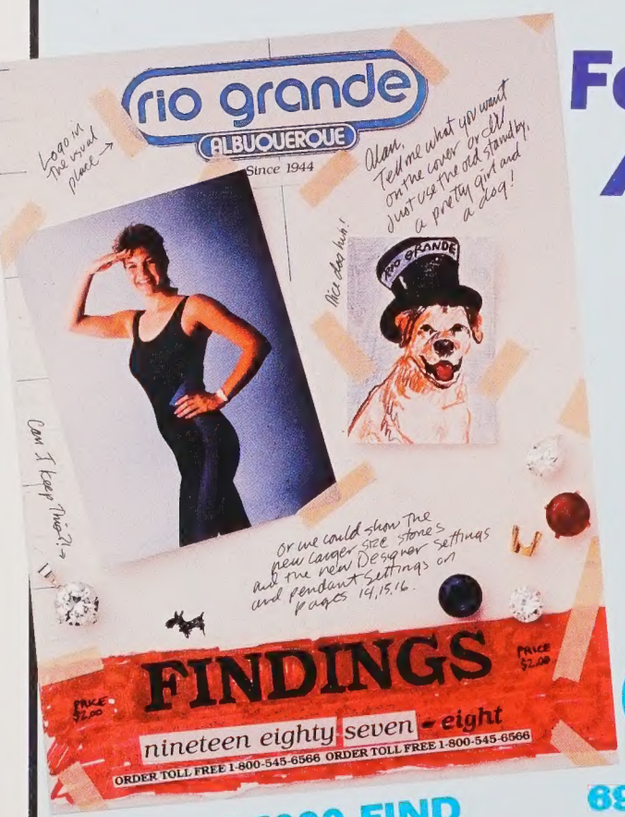

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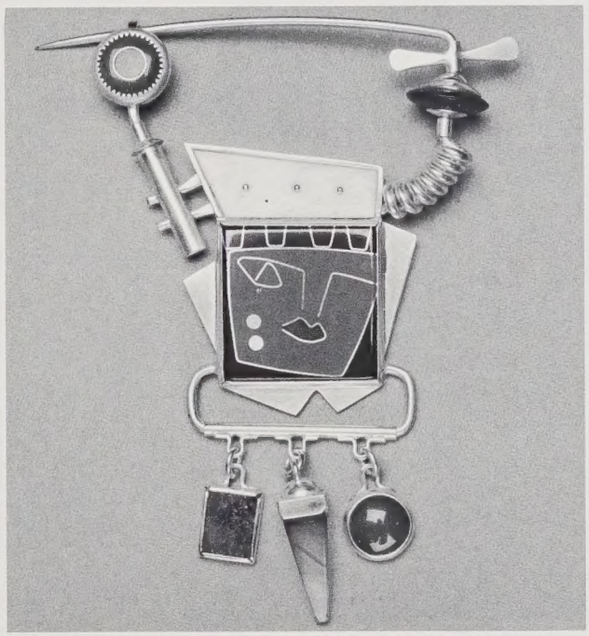

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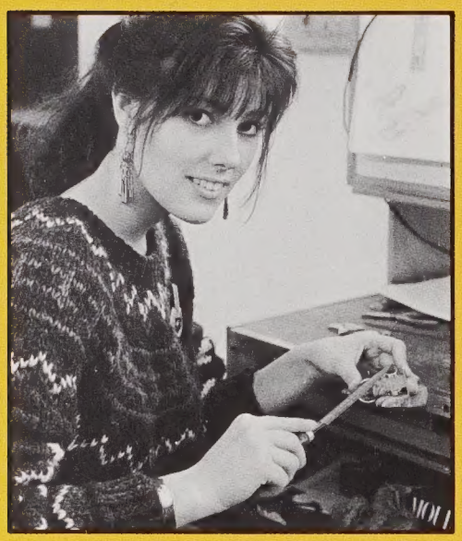

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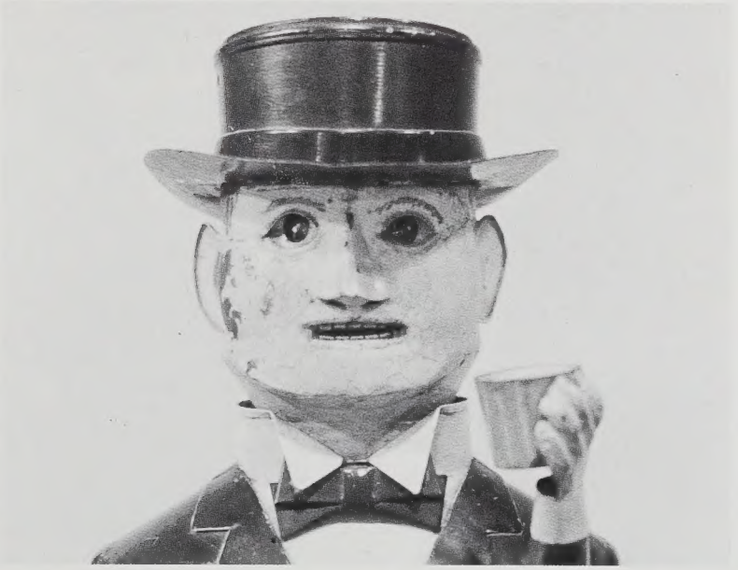

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Cover: Pencil Bros., *Texas,* pencils, glass, pencil drawing, enamel, copper, 4 x 4 x ½", 1972. Photo: Aaron Rezny
Above: Kenneth Bates, *Abstract Plate,* enemel on copper, 1985, see page 28
Right: Maker Unknown, *The Toast-master* Tin Man, sheet metal formed and painted, inset glass eyes, 21" h., c. 1910-1920, found in Chicago area. Collection: Estelle Friedman. Photo: Courtesy Michael Hall

Editorial

One of the major issues, if not *the* major issue in 20th-century craft, for lack of a better term, is the decision whether to seek proprietary inclusion in the fine art establishment—assimilated through its discourse as well as its institutions—or whether to continue on a path through the decorative, folk, popular and applied arts and design. Fine art methodologies continue to be confounded by craft's rather anomalous history. That there is a phenomenal attraction to the work of this estranged community unfortunately remains a secondary interest to the concern of either recasting craft artifacts within the hegemony of fine arts history or dismissing them as merely tangentially relevant.

This issue, which has persisted since the post-war reincarnation of craft, is particularly acute today in view of the attack on the formal hierarchy of modernist theory by post modern criticism. The formalist attitude that positions fine art in an uninterrupted progression has excluded crafts. Without critical support, craft practitioners experience a neurosis of alienation. They acquiese this alienation with the only means at hand—a denial of their formal ontology.

With post modern criticism, those timeless, transhistorical forms, which had been seen as indestructible categories, have been reopened to historical scrutiny and critical reinterpretation. Essentially, post modern criticism offers a reappraisal of crafts by challenging formal prejudices and viewing the notion of history schematically rather than axiomatically.

The formalist attitude that positions fine art in an uninterrupted progression has excluded crafts. Without critical support, craft practitioners experience a neurosis of alienation.

By embracing diverse categories, such as jewelry, holloware, sculpture, design, architectural ornament, we hope to avoid stylistic, formal and conceptual homgeneity. In fact, we embrace cardboard, plastic, safety pins and electronics as well as precious metals and gemstones.

In *Metalsmith*, we are at times insular in our concern for small metal forms. As a communication vehicle, *Metalsmith* has evolved through circumstances of social alienation, educational insularity and technical experimentation. However, the vicissitudes of our position have invigorated our discrete explorations. There is an inverse effect to our insulation. We are more determined to forge our own history, or anti-history. By embracing diverse categories, such as jewelry, holloware, sculpture, design, architectural ornament, we hope to avoid stylistic, formal and conceptual homogeneity. In fact, we embrace cardboard, plastic, safety pins and electronics as well as precious metals and gemstones. By allowing these disciplines and materials to interface, we hope to redirect inquiry away from the progress of history to the specific objects being produced and their social function. By inviting critics and historians to participate, we hope not only to encourage inquiry through discourse but also to explicate its meaning for similar experiments in other arts. —SB

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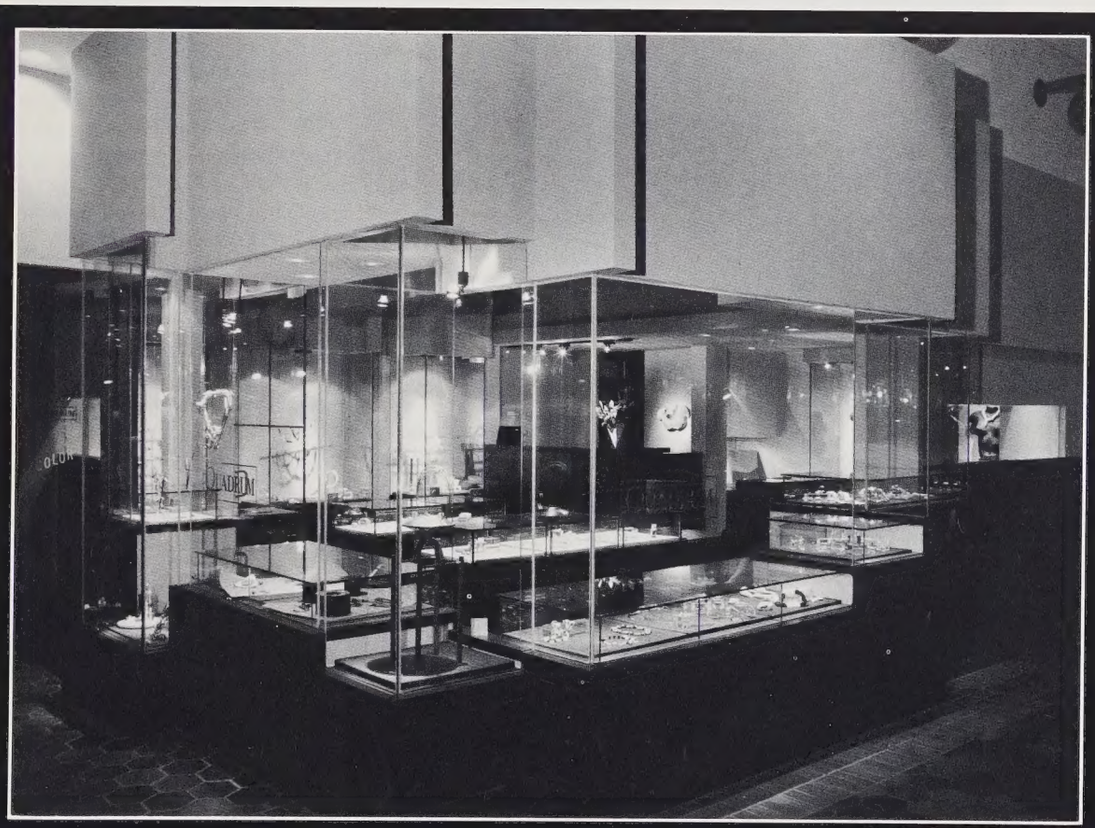

Stanley Rowin, Photograph

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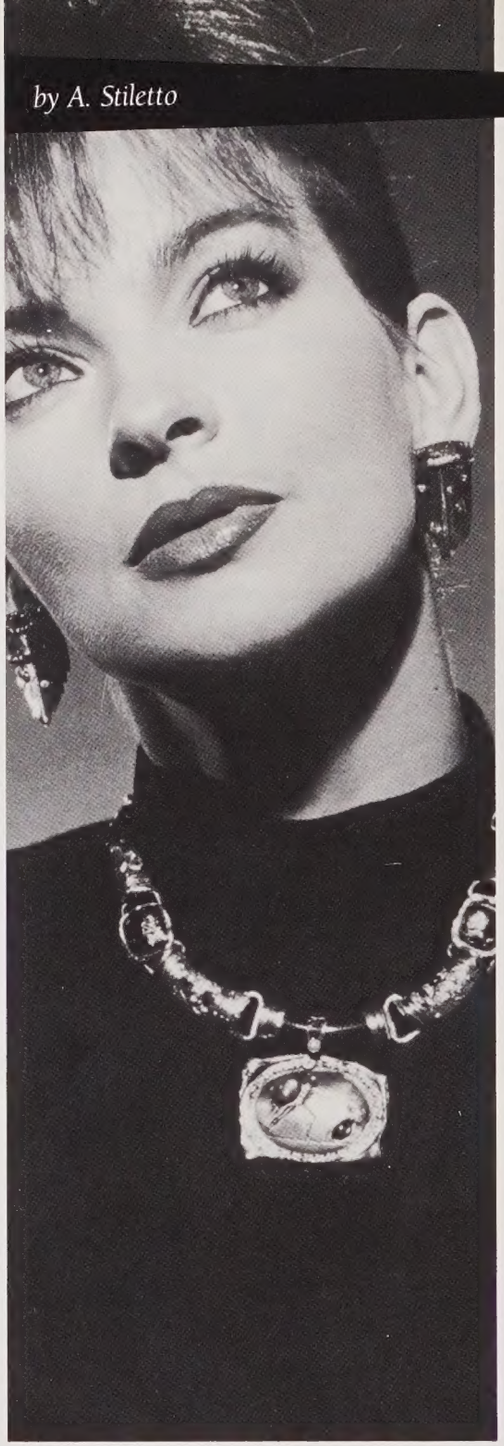
Fads and Fallacies

by A. Stiletto



While Surrealism has had a major impact on how we look at 20th-century art, the same cannot be said for its impact on 20th-century dress. The costumes reflected in the paintings and photographs of the 30s and 40s appear to be merely capricious attempts to rattle the authority of propriety and decorum. They seem to subvert rather than uphold the myth of a complimentary self-image that is the basis for success in fashion. However, Richard Martin's recent exhibition "Fashion and Surrealism," and the accompanying catalog, finds value in these costumes' playful indulgence and perverse illusion. By offering an interpretation that relies on fine art as well as fashion, he elevates the Surrealist costume to a position of therapeutic importance. Martin encourages us to reexamine the Surrealist experiments of disparate designers, from Karl Lagerfeld to Adelle Lutz, as efforts to liberate our natural instincts from clothing's social straightjacket.

Through his didactic installation, Martin reveals the power of projection not only in fashion tableaus but also in photography, advertisements, painting—in all visual media that comunicate cultural values. Once we realize that our self-image is sublimated in an illusion contrived by fashion or cultural prognosticators, the Surrealist use of Freudian dichotomies, of alienation and reinforcement becomes clear. The friction between the ordinary and the extraordinary, disfigurement in contrast to embellishment, the physical body and the concept of the body, optical truth and dreamed doppelganger implicates fashion as the mirror of vanity. Martin suggests that fashion's attraction is based on an awareness of clothing as the metaphor, metamorphosis and metaphysics of man—"allowing us to understand the contents of work by what we know intellectually." The illusionism and conceits of the eye offered by Surrealist costume conceal and at the same time reveal the marvelous in the mundane world, the dichotomy of inner reality reflected by external dress.

My disappointment with this otherwise illuminating exhibition lies with the apparent oversight in regard to Surrealist jewelry. Much has been made of Dali's collaboration with Elsa Schiaparelli, but little recognition has been paid to modern jewelers who feed on the spirit of Surrealism as do their counterparts in dress. More importantly, Martin's exposition of the Surrealist metaphor in language and imagery could have been just as easily applied to the role of jewelry as symbolic ornament.

Walking through the exhibition, mindful of Martin's stylistic schema: the bodies and dismembered parts, displacements and illusions, the ambiguity between the natural and unnatural worlds, I anticipated seeing contemporary jewelry that reaffirms the Surrealists' power: the biomorphic shapes and erotic body distortions in the work of Gijs Bakker and Emmy van Leersum, the hand bracelets of Bruno Martinazzi, the eyes of Mark Jordan, the torsos of Barry Merritt. The conceits of the eye that reveal and conceal are powerfully represented by Caroline Broadhead's monofilament veils. The disruption of customary associations is fancifully employed by Wilhelm Mattar's cleaver earpiece and Julia Mannheim's ladder necklaces. The juxtaposition of natural and unnatural imagery that probes the depth of ego informs a vast amount of contemporary jewelry from Ken Loeber's fish pins, Stirling Clark's pasta necklace, Gijs Bakker's chrysanthemum collar to Otto Kunzli's brick brooch and Catherine Riley's felt maggot beads.

In retrospect, jewelry is a uniquely appropriate Surrealist carrier, since it embodies meaning through association rather than through the physical transformation necessitated by clothing. Surrealism, which favors the optical qualities of dress, has a direct referent in jewelry as a visual art, whose language communicates on the surface of the costume, on the patina of our self-styled image. In effect, jewelry as ethereal and ephemeral "accessory," satisfies the Surrealist's desire for an artifice in whose isolation they would find clues of the subconscious—the goal of metaphor to find meaning somewhere outside itself.

The Surrealist's compression of clothing and artistic forms into the concrete sign of femininity correlates the world of real objects with the illusions of the mind. In this, jewelry's traditional role as communication of female assets finds further correspondence. The Surrealist fascination with mannequins as surrogate idols adorned with symbols of wealth and status translates into the jeweler's approach to the body as a pedestal for metaphysical messages. The Surrealist use of a hat, shoe or glove as a synechdoche for the psyche is analogous to the jeweler's diminuitive compositions that paraphrase personality. The trenchant use of Freudian symbolism is not far removed from the jeweler's peculiar rendition of ritual and romantic sentiment. All in all, the objectification of an inner reality is a major impetus for the creation of jewelry and satisfies the goal of Surrealism in its attempt to surpass conventional description by offering an analytical anatomy prescribed by the wearer's emotions.

While we are still in need of a comprehensive survey of Surrealist jewelry as Martin's show has done for dress, one thing is certain, the basic tenets of Surrealism, the repercussive content of their approach has no more proper milieu than in jewelry where mysticism and perversity, dream and reality, disruption and ornament commend its function. Where jewelry's history has found a place for Dali's fantasies, so, too, fashion history must find a place for jewelry's heros. If there is an attempt at revision, it must start with the pantheon. Where Martin has elevated the figure of Dali and Schiaparelli, I recommend we add a jester to the king and queen's throne—and there is no more likly candidate than Sam Kramer.

Barry S. Merritt, *In Homage to Salvador Dali and Earth Elements,* sterling silver, 14k, 18k gold, labordorites, pearls, black jade, hemitite intaglios, black onyx, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, 1988. Collection: Susan Fritz

A. Stiletto works in and around New York and writes a regular column on fashion for *Metalsmith.*

The book/catalog *Fashion and Surrealism,* written by Richard Martin, was published by Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 597 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10017 in hardcover and paperback, with 56 pages in color and 300 duotone illustrations. The exhibition "Fashion and Surrealism" opened in the fall of 1987 at Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and will travel in the summer of 1988 to the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

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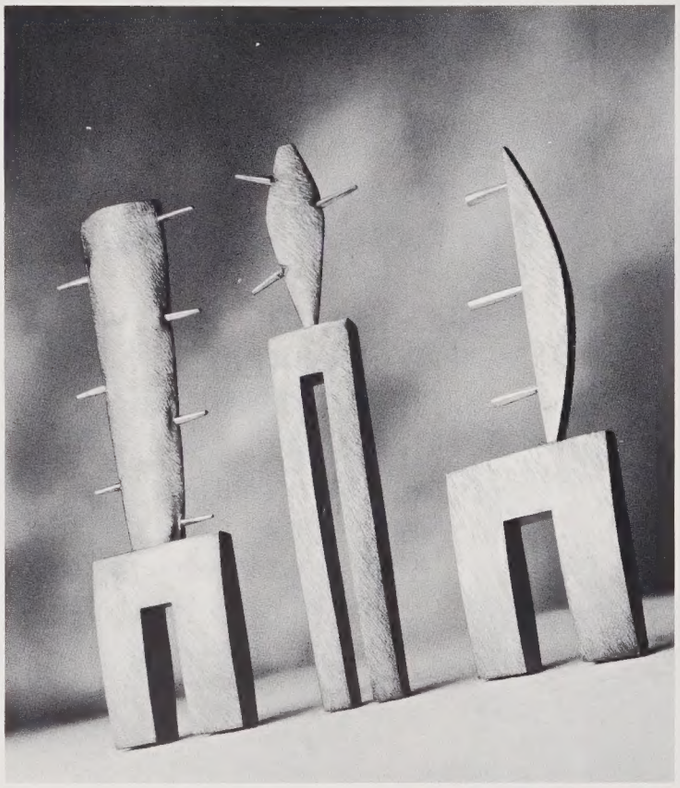

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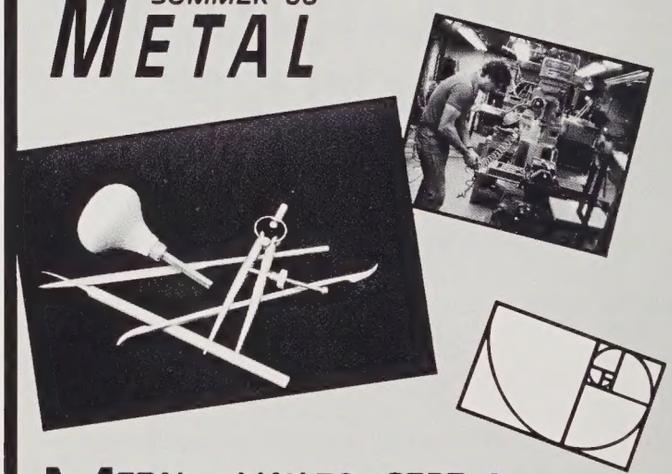

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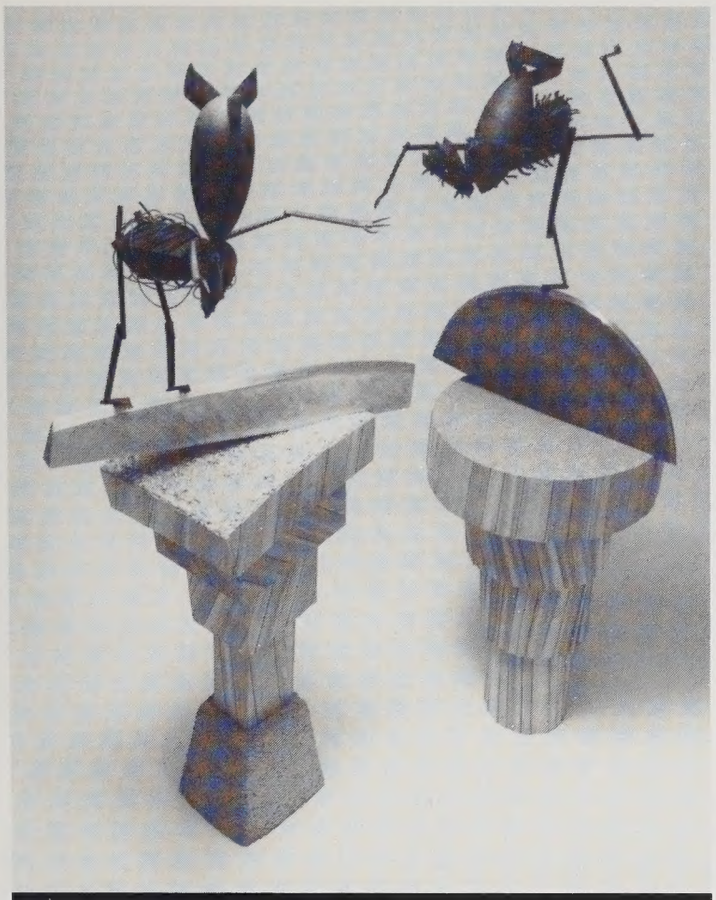

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ARTISTS WHO WRITE

by Alfred Werner

Not until the last century did the malicious and false concept arise that artists—painters, sculptors, printmakers—were anti-intellectuals. During the Renaissance Age the artist who wrote poetry, composed treatises on esthetic problems or manuals on technique, who discoursed with sophisticated scholars and traveled widely, was not uncommon. A man of the Baroque Age like Rubens spoke several languages and was assigned delicate diplomatic missions by his government. Cambridge University conferred upon him the honorary degree of master of arts.

The mass alienation of the creative man from society began with the diminishing power of church and aristocracy, the traditional sponsors of the arts. Worst hit were the artists: a poet could keep from starving by the occasional sale of an essay to the press; the painter could only peddle his canvases from place to place. A man like Pissarro had no time for reading; all the time that he could spare from actual work had to be used for visits to *marchands d'art*, and to any potential patron, for he had a wife and seven children to support. Up to the French Revolution artists were often the lions of salon society and indistinguishable in dress from the aristocracy. In the 19th century, the serious artist was, as a rule, an outsider, confined to the poorer sections of the cities and barred by his straightened circumstances from visits to the theater, to opera and concert hall. Exceptions to this rule were a few with substantial financial resources, such as Delacroix and Degas. The painters and sculptors who received medals and prizes were prosperous. But they were not the men whose works are still to be seen in the museums, whose names are the stars of the history of art. The successful were the skillful but most conservative professors of the Ecoles des Beaux-Arts, or the fashionable portrait painters catering to the nouveau-riche. The truly good painter had no public. To the bourgeois he was a ridiculous figure. Even Zola who, in his youth, had gone out of his way to defend the Impressionists, in his novel, *L'Oeuvre*, created the stereotype of the half-crazy artists whose road, inevitably, leads to suicide.

The concept of the artist as an impulsive dolt who commits the most terrible blunders whenever he dares to step out of his narrow domain, has survived into our own time, even though the 20th century is unbelievably rich in painters and sculptors whose intellectualism is beyond question. It is astonishing how many excellent literary contributions to the understanding of art have come from the pens of modern artists. Chagall, Kokoshchka, Klee, Picasso and many others have published stories, poems and plays. Yet, the public remembers only the anti-intellectual rantings of certain groups, such as Jackson Pollock, his friends and followers who used to gather in New York's Cedar Bar. Pollock paid no attention to the written word, and what he said was often incoherent. His violent gestures and tragic end—he crashed his car into a tree—are what is remembered about him.

Another who has done much to reinforce the notion that the artist is a man who cannot be taken too seriously is Dali. He self-consciously created his own legend of madness, perhaps because it would ensure his extraordinary role in society even if, one day, his artistic faculties should decline (and decline they did in the last two decades!). The alcoholic Pollock at least seems to have been sincere. But what about the sincerity of a Dali? It is related that during a large dinner party he convincingly played the madman—until the moment the waiter brought him the check. Suddenly, sobered, he scrutinized each item with the earnestness of a book-keeper. . . .

Much damage has been done by several artists who—not unlike Dali—have demonstrated their rejection of an over-intellectualized approach to art by deliberately making pronunciamentos they knew to be absurd. All this, plus a score of sensational novels and Hollywood movies about artists, created for the general public—which rarely meets artists in the flesh—the image of the artist as an unkempt oaf who becomes ridiculous as soon as he speaks. Has this image any foundation in reality?

"Great artists have always been intellectually quick," Edgar Wind recently asserted in *Art and Anarchy*, and he added: "I have never met a significant painter or sculptor, who did not speak and think exceedingly well." Professor Wind then quoted the famous dealer Ambroise Vollard, who for a new kind of literary prize had appointed a jury consisting only of painters:

"I must admit," Vollard writes, "I was not without a certain anxiety as to the choice that so unusual a jury would make. To everyone's surprise, these artists of such diverse tendencies showed the most discriminating, and at the same time, the boldest taste: their almost unanimous choice fell upon Paul Valery, who had not as yet been elected to the Academia Francaise."

Can, then, the "romantic" idea of the solitary man in a wretched studio, dreamily applying pigment to canvas, oblivious to events in the outside world, still be entertained by serious minds? Do psychological tests support the validity of this concept? No, says Professor Geraldine Pelles: "Since the 1930s, no differentiation of the artist as a distinct personality type has been found in evidence offered by psychological tests, which show the artists are not temperamentally unlike other persons and that they differ among themselves more than they differ from unselected groups of people. So poorly defined is the hypothetical figure of the artist that judges in one series of experiments were unable to make good predictions, from Rorschach protocols, as to whether or not the subject was an artist." (Art, Artists, and Society.)

It was the 19th century that witnessed the phenomena of hundreds of artists who avenged themselves on an unappreciative society by defying society's code and by living in hedonistic, self-destructive ways as if ruination was the ultimate goal of their lives. Basically, they were anti-social nihilists, bored with life, defiantly living on the fringes of society. But the same century also produced men who defied society and its limitations by creating great art far in advance of their time. Among the painters, Eugene Delacroix, Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh might be mentioned. That they were outsiders—especially the last two—is not important. Their eminence is due to the fact that, in the dual capacity of painter and writer, they were able to expand vastly the frontiers of our esthetic cosmos, to conquer areas far beyond the ken of preceding generations. . . .

Delacroix, Gaugin, Van Gogh: their writings dispel the false notion that "artists say the silliest things." Unfortunately, students of the history of art are not often required to devote as much time to the perusal of letter as to the examination of paintings, sculptures and prints. Many a college student who has obtained a fair idea of what Rubens' paintings are like has never sampled his letters (though the painter's correspondents included the leading scholars, collectors and artists of the time). Sir Joshua Reynolds' portraits are more widely known than the *Discourses* he delivered at the Royal Academy, let along charming letters he addressed to Lady Ossory. Pablo Picasso's conversations with Christian Zervos or Henry Moore's articles on sculpture are not often enough used by writers on contemporary art, though their value as bridges to the creative ego is unmeasurable. It is true that some of the world's greatest artists—Giotto, Giogione, El Greco and Rembrandt come quickly to mind—have either failed to leave to posterity a single letter or, at most, nothing more than some trivialities that neither illuminate their personlities nor shed additional light on their work. It is equally true that an artist at times turns out to be a very weak commentator on his own work, a very awkward and inadequate expounder of his views. But the majority of artists are perfect guides through those bewildering landscapes they have created. They ought to be listened to—with avid attention!

Kiff Slemmons, *Hands of the Heroes Series: Colette*, sterling silver, brass, garnet. Photo: Rod Slemmons

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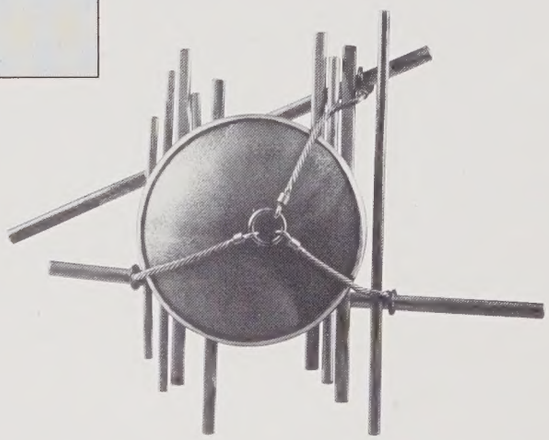

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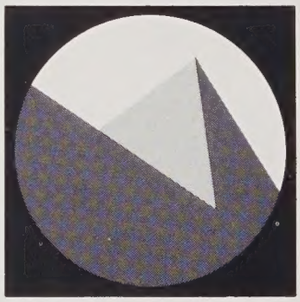

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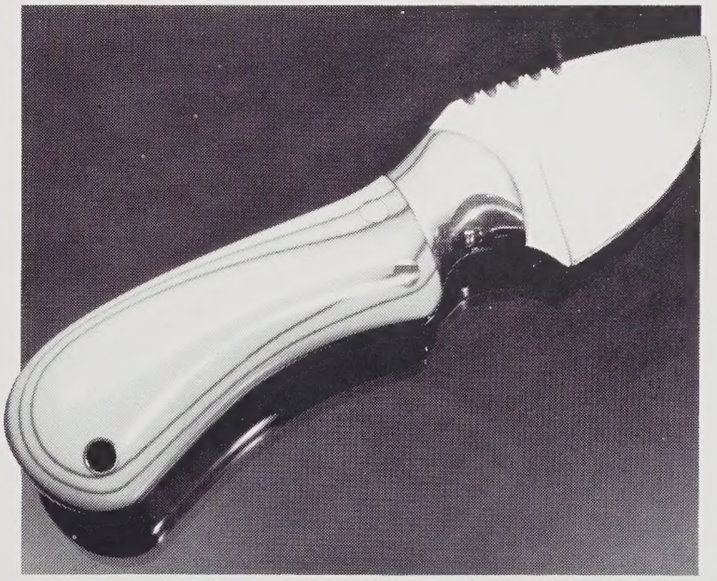

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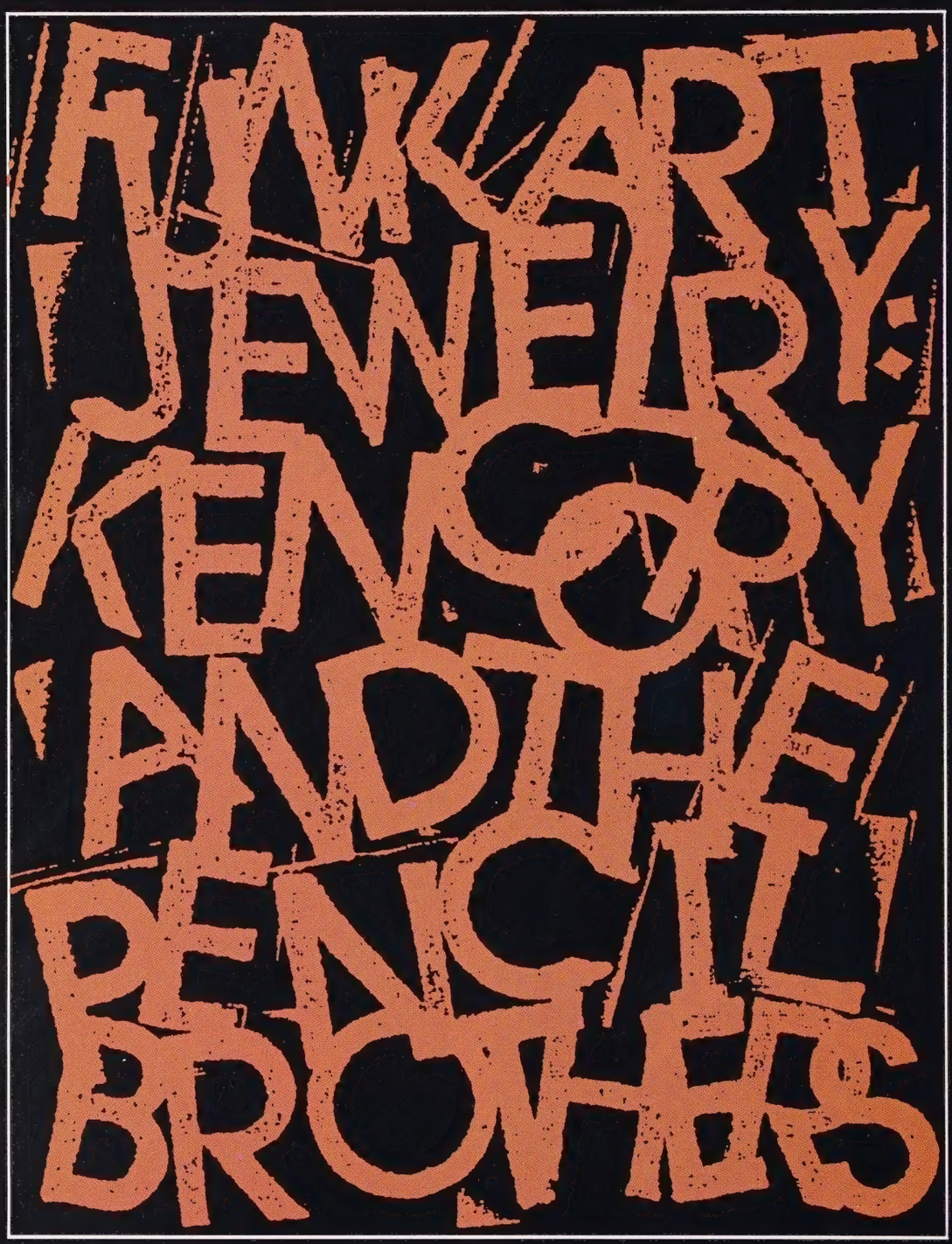
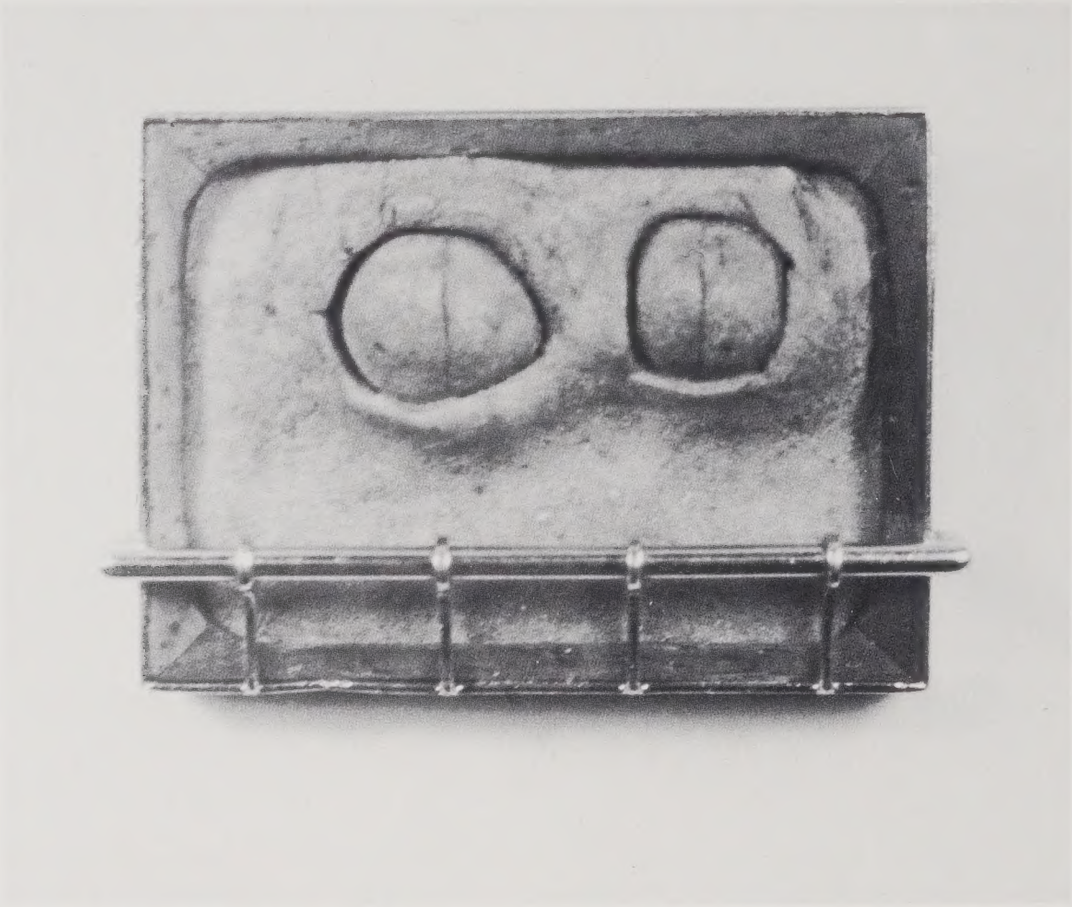
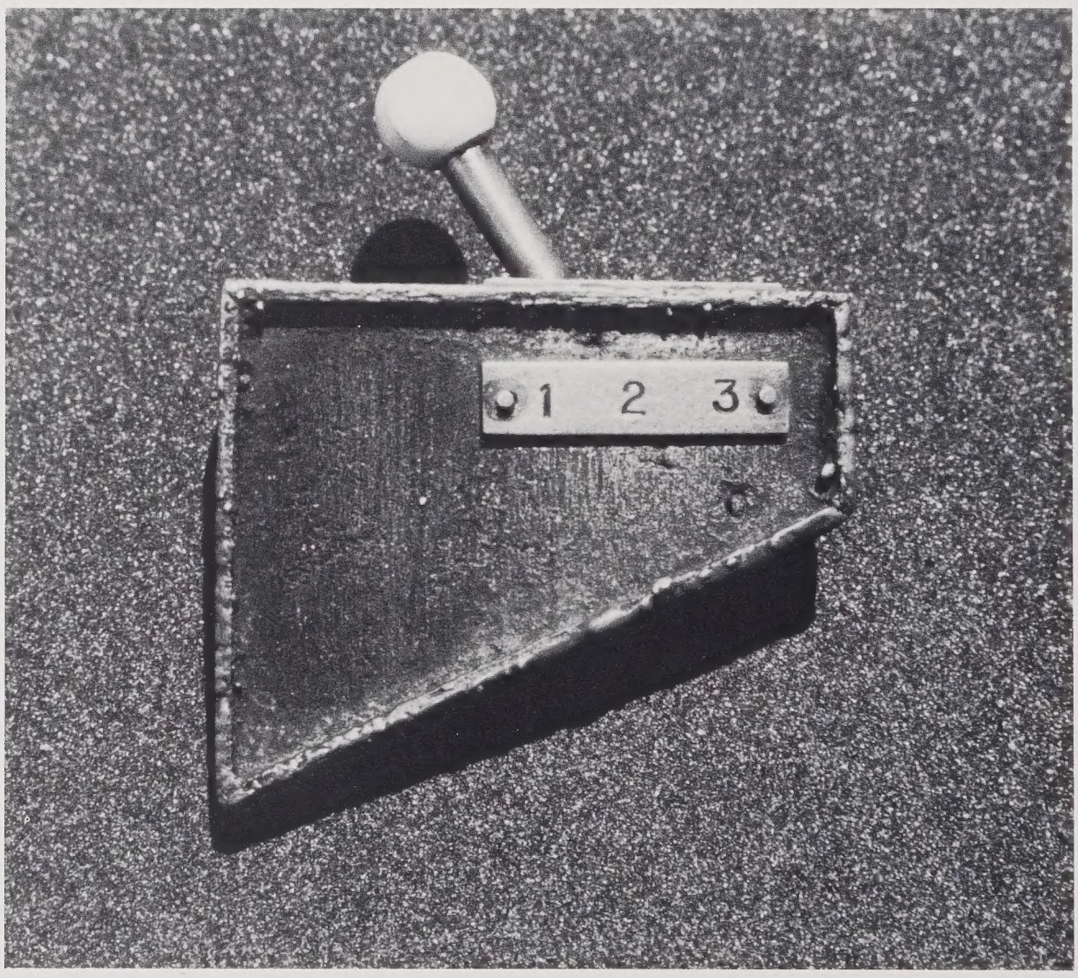

FUNK ART JEWELRY:
MEMORY AND THE PENCIL
BROTHERS

Figure 9: *Pin*, brass, plastic, 1¾ x 1½ x ¾". 1968

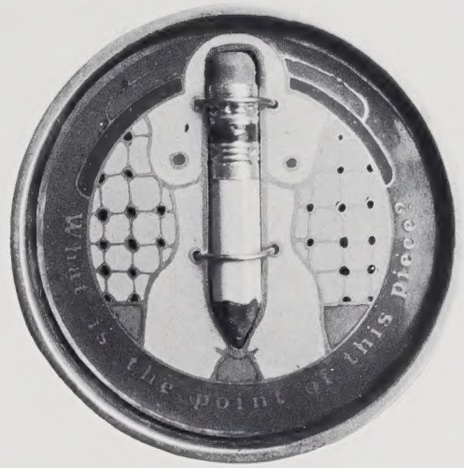




Top (Figure 7): *Pin,* ceramic, rosewood, chrome, 2¼ x 1½ x ½", 1968.
Above (Figure 5): *Pin* ("gear shift"), copper, brass, bone, 1½ x 2 x ½", 1969

KEN CORY AND THE PENCIL BROS.

by Michael Dunas



In *Objects: USA*, the chapter on jewelry bears witness to the hallowed names of modern history. The collective effort of such luminaries as Eikerman, Craver, Fike, Roach, Radakovich, Winston, Renk established a canon for work of the 40s, 50s and much of the 60s. The litany of their works in *Objects: USA* as late as 1969, reinforced the growing belief in the value of a self-conscious jewelry, reflective of post-WWII American culture. But 1969 was not a propitious time for the propagation of the faith. American society was facing a challenge from the "counterculture," a new generation bent on finding alternative lifestyles, religious, esthetic and psychic experiences. The work of the modern pioneers exalted in *Objects: USA* was good artistic jewelry, but dated jewelry nonetheless. It lacked the vernacular of an organic tradition that responds to changing times. Near the end of the jewelry section, however, was a double-page spread introducing Fred Woell and Ken Cory. Here was work that was obviously made in and of the 60s. It was brash, humorous, raw, "popularly" engaged and engaging. It demanded of jewelry that it become socially relevant at the risk of losing its traditional value.

The New Yorker covered the exhibition of "Objects U.S.A.," and the reviewer's comments were dutifully recorded on the dust-jacket of the book: "I felt something almost like national pride as I walked through the exhibition halls and marveled at the beautiful and interesting and insane things my countryman are doing . . . an art-school aura pervades the exhibition, but it's a different kind of art school from any we've known in the past, less earnest and arty, more easy and tolerable of idiosyncrasy."

I had the same reaction upon first seeing Fred Woell's *Good Guys* pendant of walnut, steel staples with plastic cameos of Dick Tracy and Superman, as well as Ken Cory's pin: a humorous tadpole with serpentine tail of sensuous plexiglass and crude cast-copper, arrowhead imagery. As someone who had come of age in the 60s, I felt these pieces were made for me. I could safely claim my attraction for them without trepidation or guilt that I was accepting the values and associations of jewelry held so dear by my bourgeois elders.

The next time I was struck by Cory's work was around 1972 when I saw the Pencil Bros. *Texas* piece *(see cover)* in the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York. Cory had already participated in "Young Americans 1969," "Goldsmiths 70," a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, California Design XI at the Pasadena Art Museum and had begun to work with Les LePere, an "underground" illustrator whom Cory first met at graduate school at Washington State University. The *Texas* piece was their signature collaboration, a pencil drawing by LePere rendered in "comix" style with an enameled border and mitered pencil frame by Cory. The diminutive canvas of this piece encapsulated the full range of alternative esthetic values that characterize the Pop and more specifically Funk attitudes in art that reached its apogee during this period: the effrontery of tradition in material handling, the use of borrowed imagery and found materials, the challenge to the pedestal and the frame as the proprietary milieu for artistic presentation, the low-brow stance of using a pencil drawing as a jewel to be embellished, the embrace of commodities in a world of rarified artworks, the streetwise humor and free-spirited rebellion of a "pedestrian" culture.

It is not surprising that Cory's work has roots in the Funk art movement since he did study ceramics in California at the time of Funk's inception. Funk art achieved its greatest expression and brought significant notoriety to craft media through the efforts of Robert Arneson and his students at UC Davis. Like Pop art, its progenitor, Funk was anti-establishment and popularly based. Unlike Pop, it deliberately set out to create art of questionable taste. It was California's answer to and rebellion against the hegemony of the New York art market. As Garth Clark has noted: "Whereas Pop art drew its aesthetic from a commercial craft form of poster-advertising art, Funk drew from what might be termed consumer craft."[1] Although short-lived (late 60s to early 70s), Funk art attempted to build on the intrinsic social values of popular art but also to extend a suitability of forms to neglected media like illustration and craft.

At that time, Funk art became the vanguard of the counterculture's intrusion into the fine art world, while political jewelry and ethnic body adornment became the focal point of the counterculture's uniform. It seemed that the youth ghettos of every major West Coast city from Seattle to San Diego were crowded with itinerant vendors selling the visual street language of peace symbols, tie-dyed t-shirts, headbands, beads and black-lite posters, a micromarket of alternative commodities that symbolized the counterculture's binding ideologies.

Funk's contribution was one essentially of attitude. It was one of context rather than form. At issue was the reaction evoked by the object that penetrated the viewer's preconceived notion of art. Funk was a tactic borrowed from Dada directed against the cool, mannered approach of Pop and the moral tone of Abstract Expressionism. The name funk, as duly noted by Garth Clark, was taken from the term "bagless funk" describing "the musk smell of a woman's groin." "What is felt is real and tangible, what is thought to be distrusted. The residue or the byproduct is more interesting and provocative than the intellectual process that creates it. In essence, 'It's a groove to stick your finger down your throat and see what comes up,' this is funk."[2]

While Funk art quickly dissipated, returning in transmuted forms throughout craft media, from kitsch to neo-mannerism and tromp l'oeil, the nihilistic attitude toward high-brow art remained a persistent force in broad-based hippie ethos—a reformation through banal normality. In contrast to Pop artists using comic strips and billboards in their work, in a sense transforming them into art, Cory took these "proletarian-graphics"-made-art and brought them back to popular sanity, retaining the esthetic effects of art but shedding along the way the pretentions of the art world.

Top (Figure 4): *Buckle*, copper, brass, enamel, 3" d., 1976. **Above (Figure 2):** *"What Is the Point of This Piece?" Buckle*, 3"d., 1974

Funk artists loved the plastic qualities of pure pictorial order. For example, in ceramics glaze colors used were of the hobby-store variety, construction was sloppy expressing the undeniable disdain for preconceived design, while images were often verbal/visual puns, evidence of intuitive perception. Throughout his Pencil Bros. period, Cory maintained a formal empathy with his ceramic counterparts. In his jewelry, the hobby-store glazes were translated into garish "Pop" enamels, an almost irreverent use of delicate medium, a slanderous attempt to handle the materials like flat lithography. Cory's enamels complementing LePere's illustrations create a vibrating surface of chaotic color, an effect similar to that of a Peter Max poster. Both the Funk ceramists and Cory maintained a reference to a commonplace reality, Arneson with his typewriters and toasters and Cory with his pins and buckles. However, their material handling manifests a stronger iconoclastic gesture toward the popular, resulting in works that border on the banal—the kitsch.

The use of heavy-handed verbal/visual puns so rampant in Funk sculpture can be seen in Cory's Pencil Bros. buckle of 1974 called *What is the point of this piece?* (*figure 2*). The round frame serves as a target riveting our attention to the bull's eye (or the bull's target), which is a frontal female nude. Affixed to the surface is a pencil nub, an arrow that has found its target, the bull's eye of the erogenous zone. This piece is blatantly vulgar, crass in composition and raw in its insensitive imagery. The comic portrayal of the female body, the phallic symbol of the pencil, the moniker of the Pencil Bros. . . . mightier than the sword, mightier than the . . . can be viewed as offensive and pornographic in the current climate of feminist issues. But in the historical context of 1972, the use of pornography or sexual art was seen as a liberating device to free society's repressed emotions and prejudices. That was the point of funk. Put your finger down your throat and see what comes up. It was intuitive, without responsibility or inhibition. It showed the worst art side-by-side with the best. Cory apparently liked it that way. In fact, the little cameos that adorn Cory's frames (*figure 3*), reminiscent of Woell's comic strip heros, seem to be fleeting images that crossed Cory's mind at the time of making; the spaceships, stars, hearts, skunks are the heros of Cory's subconscious. They are there for no other reason than that Cory liked them. They are in the same instance decorative and primal in his self-reflective iconography. They are the preemptive signs of the artist's free choice.

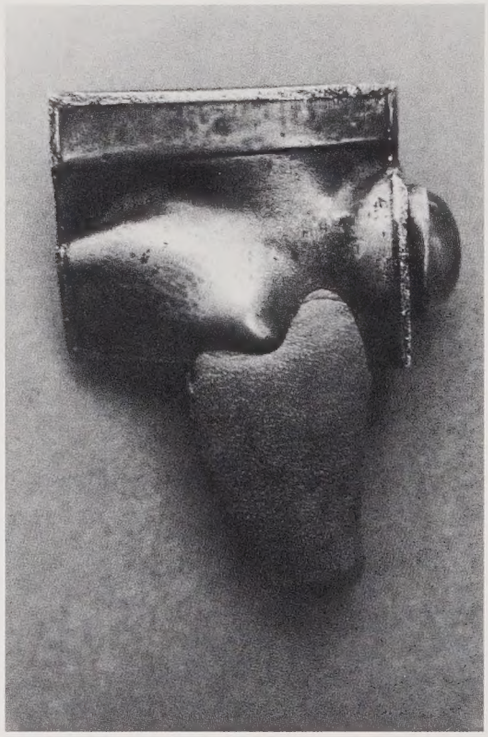


Figure 6: *Pin,* silver, leather, stone, 1¾ x 2¾ x ½", 1967

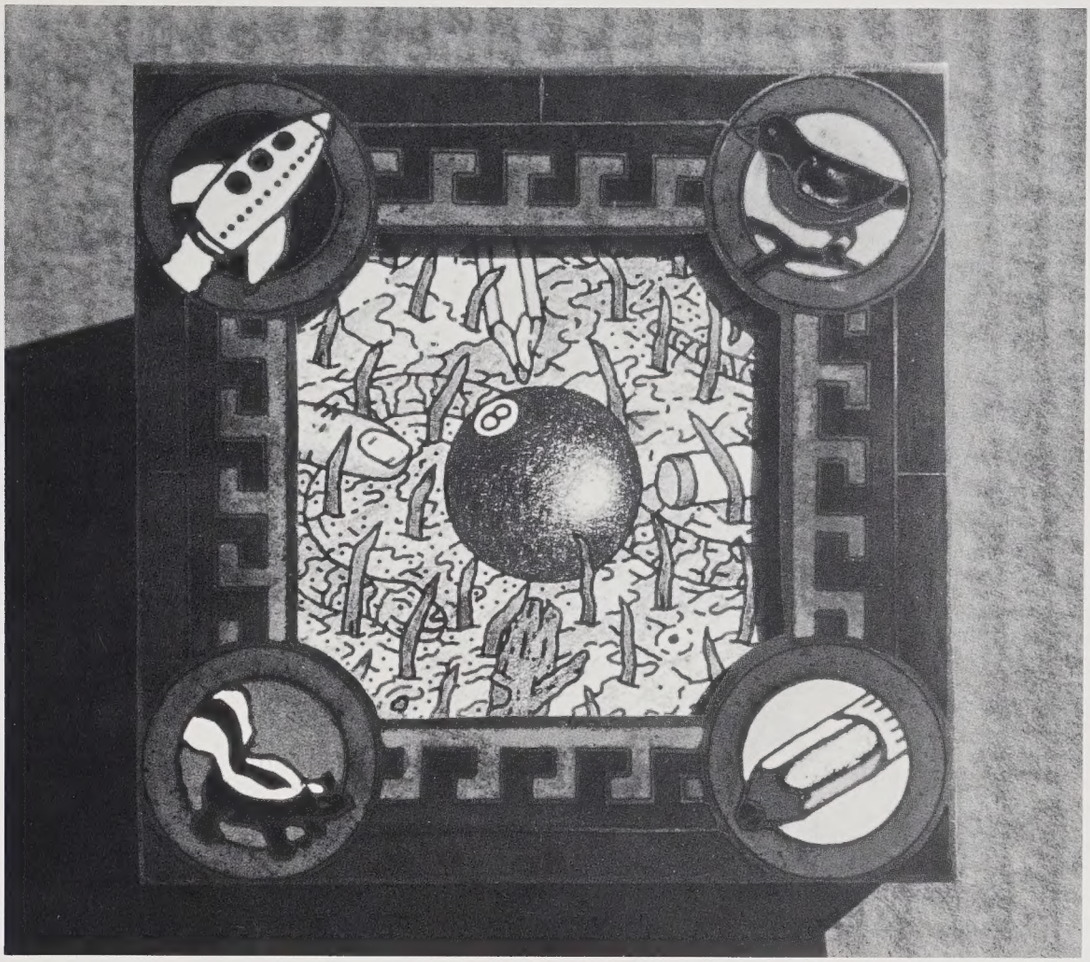
On two points Cory's work differs from his Funk counterparts: the concern for function and careful workmanship. Cory makes jewelry and in doing so avoids the pitfalls of sculpture. The ceramists were determined to remain outside the established art world, estranged from institutional control by making work of questionable taste and decorum. But because their work was oriented toward the pedestal and recognizable as sculpture, whether in the Dada or Surrealist tradition, they eventually became assimilated into the gallery scene and the cannons of critical history, as have other subversive movements before them. The ceramists used commodities as referents to their art; Cory used art in his commodities. Cory made belt buckles because he said they can be used to hold the pants up as well as to facilitate their removal. By designing such work that can be democratically circulated in the marketplace rather than the rarified atmosphere of the gallery, encoded by the stringent paradigm of art critics, Cory asks to be judged by the populace rather than the cognescenti, a condition proscribed for non-art.

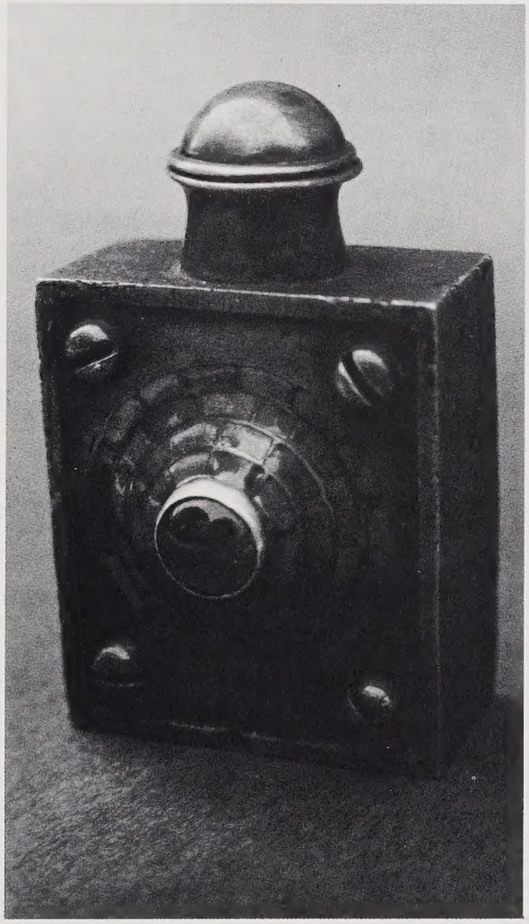
Consequently, Cory's emphasis on craftsmanship eschews the use of gesture as a polemical strategy. The ceramists, whose skill was undeniable, were determined to make work that was sloppy and repulsive, although many did later relinquish this tactic in favor of polemic imagery. Their work was viewed eventually as an iconoclastic conceit contrived to reflect their disdain for the intractable posture of the art world vis-a-vis the craft medium. Cory, on the other hand, appeared free to enjoy the amorous interaction with his work in process. He made it because he liked it and thus summoned the inherent desire to be naive—another basic criteria for non-art. He did not create his work to debunk myths of the art world but to reaffirm the alternative experience of commonplace, handmade objects of artistic value.

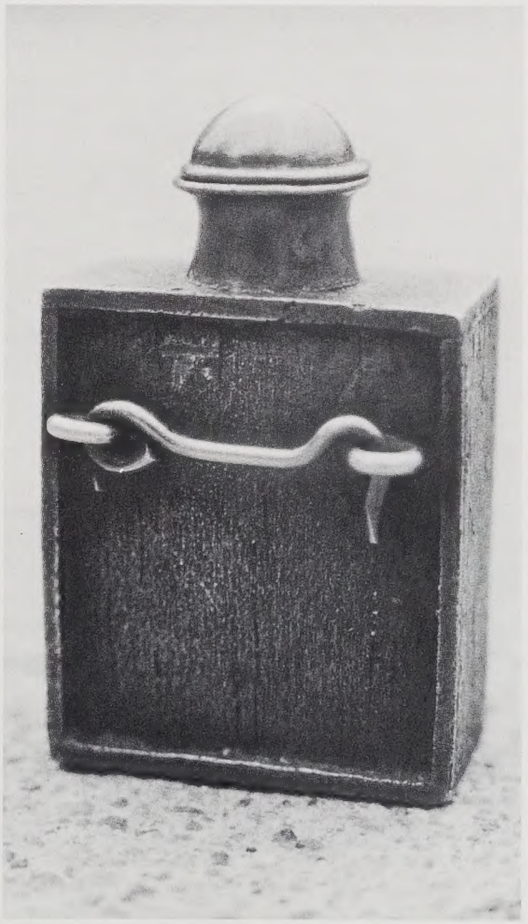
A word or two must be said about the illustrations of this period. For the most part they were inspired by and often rendered by Les LePere. LePere was a painting student when he met Cory at WSU. He had also been doing cartoons and illustrations for a Seattle underground paper under the nom de plume "The Pencil," hence the Pencil Bros. The style of LePere's illustrations was that of the "comix" (Zap, R. Crumb, S. Clay Wilson, etc.), proletarian alternatives to mass culture that dealt with cliché situations of a decadent society. They looked back to the work of Harvey Kurtzman at *Mad* and forward to Art Spiegelman's *RAW*.

Cory's "framing" of LePere's illustrations as jewelry was problematic in its relationship with painting or two-dimensional art. By maintaining the integrity of the picture plane, in setting them within a frame, Cory appears to question the traditional role of the jeweler who subordinates his work to the enhancement of the esthetic content of the gemstone. The question persists: Is the heart and soul of the pin Cory's framing or LePere's illustrations? Their composition, strictly two-dimensional, frontal, square and framed, rendered in pencil and ink with figurative imagery, carries the nominal weight of painting. In these collaborative pieces, Cory plays with our perceptions and especially our preconceived notions of art and jewelry while maintaining a respect for the artist's work and an honest love of jewelry's function as an ornament.

In tracing Cory's roots back from Funk to Pop art influences, it is instructive to compare his work with that of Woell, both progenitors of pop jewelry. Pop was a hybrid of two abstraction-dominated decades and as such is the heir to an abstract rather than a figurative tradition. As Lucy Lippard has said: "This unexpected outcome of a decade of Abstract Expressionism was hardly welcome since it dashed hopes for the rise of a new humanism. Man might make an occasional appearance in Pop canvases but only as a robot remotely controlled by the Consumers Index or as a sentimentalized parody of the ideal."[3] In his *Good Guys* pendant, Woell employed an anything-goes attitude towards materials and subject matter, destroying barriers of self-consciousness and self-importance, working, as Cage and Rauschenberg professed, "in the gap between







Top (Figure 3): *Skunk* framed picture, champleve enamel, colored pencil, ink, 1974. **Above left (Figure 8):** *Brick Breast Bottle,* copper, brass, silver, enamel, 1¼ x 1 x 2″, 1971. **Above right:** *Brick Breast Bottle,* back

life and art," or, as Lippard claims, as a sentimentalized parody of the ideal. In straddling the chasm between life and art, Woell was "hotly" engaged, throwing back to society the sterile images of its debauched culture. Cory, on the other hand, chose to work in the clean, neat, detached, classical stream of commercial iconography. He was "cooly" removed from any sentiment or therapeutic impulse. Like LePere's illustrations, Cory's imagery seems to be robotically controlled by the cliché situations he found in contemporary society. His strategy was not one of parody but of a romantic mimicry, a comic fantasy outside of life and art rather than between them. Like LePere's illustrations, the relevance of Cory's pins depends on the context of the situation in which they are perceived (or worn) rather than in the empathy with the narrative.

In this way, by playing with the perceptual techniques of "cool" Pop and the seductive materiality of his craft, Cory was able to create objects of concrete reality without the lure of artistic interpretation. In the earlier "gear shift" pin of 1969 (*figure 5*), Cory isolated an apparent fragment and presented it close-up through jewelry's inferential scale. The ambivalence of this fragment's scale gives it a personality it never had before and in this way it becomes a vehicle for an entirely new lyric and plastic power. Cory successfully anesthetized the object without rendering it illusionary. This piece is without hints as to context or purpose. It is cold and clinical, without ambiguity, nevertheless arbitrary in representation.

Cory's intense fascination with the plastic power of his materials is made clear in these fabricated abstractions. The themes throughout Cory's work are consistent and reflective of the "counterculture's" then preoccupation with sex, ecology, humor, play and satire. The often-published 1967 pin of silver, leather and stone (*figure 6*) is a fixed image of the period with its proverbial tongue dangling in playful defiance yet ironically seductive in its tactical surface. The droll references to nature, running the gamut from decaying barns to slithering serpents, recur time and again, transformed by Cory's intuitive handling of discordant materials like copper and plastic into disarming portraits and landscapes—like the stare of the humorous "owl" eyes of his 1968 ceramic and rosewood (portrait?) pin (*figure 7*) that strip us of our pretensions and our vanity. But these themes are not the subject matter of Cory's pieces; they are the situations that contrive the action of the material. Cory wants us to engage the material as the communicative vehicle of his craft. He wants us to strip bare our superficial attraction for facile narrative and release our subconscious attraction for pure plasticity, the visual and tactile properties of the object. When Cory began to cast copper (by melting down pennies), he recovered the visual rewards of a weathered and earthy process—the "mined" veins of tactile memories. Cory's use of abstraction was not meant to abstract representation but to abstract the plastic attributes of the material.

Pin, copper, plastic, c.1967

In the brick breast bottles (*figure 8*), with their blatant sexual references, there appears to be no attempt to add anything new to our knowledge of sexuality. Rather, the utilitarian nature of the object, forcing us to feel and use it, calls attention to how it is made and what it is made of. Although Cory's method is devious, suggesting a vicarious thrill in fondling a nipple in the guise of opening the bottle, he apparently believes that material sensuality cannot be approached directly. Because we have been inured by the historical associations of materials like silver and gold, we have to be seduced to appreciate the qualities of copper and brass.

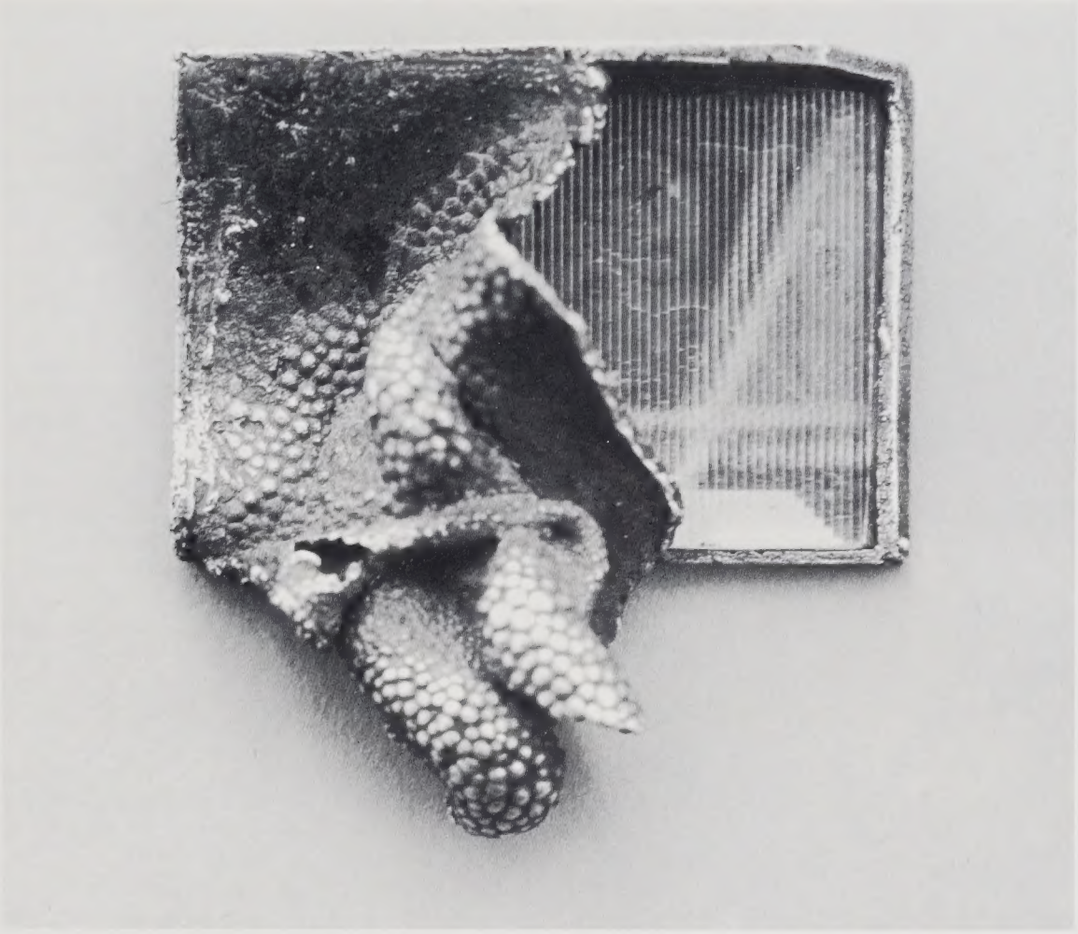
Cory's investigation into plastic follows that of copper—abstracting the metaphoric as well as the physical "plastic" essence of debased materials. Plastic has become ubiquitous not only because of its formal properties of translucency and color but also because it is a material that has no history in art. It is a contemporary material that has been associated with industry and technology rather than fine art or jewelry. Although many other practitioners have explored with greater success the formal properties of the material, Cory remains unchallenged as an exponent of its suggestive qualities. In the brass and plastic pin of 1968 (*figure 9*), Cory uses his familiar technique of a hard, inorganic, industrial ground (brass), rendered in a faintly anthropomorphic composition. Protruding from the rosette face is a delicate, sensuous red plastic tongue that slithers forth to caress a translucent lozenge. Although we are amused by the anthropomorphic references, what is at work is plastic acting like plastic. The elements seem to be oozing of their own accord, doing a little mating dance right before our eyes. Cory's pin is a candid photo of an inorganic material acting organically. The mystery of plastic as a material had a hold on Cory's generation just as gemstones had on his predecessors. Already Cory had spotlighted this element of mystery in an earlier 1967 pin (*figure 10*), where a silver cast sheathing is being torn away to reveal the plastic soul within, and in a 1968 pin (figure 11), where his signature snakelike form is swimming within a landscape of plastic that renders perspective simultaneously real and illusory, very much like glass artists use the translucent property of their medium.

Cory diverts the viewer's attention away from any recognizable theme or representational security with the sudden discovery of a "plastic" medium. He ignores the artist's mandate to transcend material and technique in favor of a truncated process where material confronts handling, where the artist respects the intrinsic life of the material and accepts it as an equal partner. He does not control it but cooperates with it. Consequently, the expressive qualities of Cory's pins cannot be clearly attributed solely to him or to the organic vitality of the medium. By establishing this ambiguity, Cory makes work that remains intractably plastic and effects a nihilistic seduction that takes more than it gives. It's like sticking your finger down the throat of the material to see what comes up.

Notes:

1. Garth Clark, Margie Hughto, *A Century of Ceramics in the United States*, 1878-1978 (New York: Dutton, 1979), p. 162
2. Harold Paris, "Sweet Land of Funk," quoted in Clark and Hughto, p. 159
3. Lucy Lippard, *Pop Art* (New York: Praeger, 1966), P. 9

Michael Dunas writes on craft, art and design.



Top (Figure 10): *Pin,* silver, plastic, 2 x 2 x 1", c.1967
Above (Figure 11): *Pin,* copper, plastic, 1½ x 1 x 1½", 1968

THIS SIDE OF OZ: A HEART FOR THE TIN MAN

by Michael D. Hall

Metal shop tin men seem to be as American as L. Frank Baum's tale of Dorothy and company in the land of Oz. Throughout this century, tin men have surfaced as a conspicuous folk art form, and because of their longevity within the genre an inquiry into the social, occupational and artistic concerns of their makers seems overdue.

Within cultural history, tin men must be understood as a product of the commercial context in which they are found. It is a simple fact the eye-catching objects draw attention to themselves and to their surroundings. Tin men—as commercial logos—have stood in front of sheet metal shops for nearly a hundred years. The earliest documented figures seem to have been fabricated in the first decade of the 20th century. Comparable figures are being made today and still perform promotional tasks similar to their predecessors.

As art, the figures need to be studied stylistically. The look of American sheet metal figures has changed greatly over time, even though their function as advertising "attention getters" has remained constant. The earliest metal shop tin men were elegant dandies—"gents" in formal attire (*figure 1*). Stylistically, they are related to the finely carved wooden figures that stood as signage in front of "Gas Light" era cigar stores, millinery shops and haberdasheries.

Tin men from the 1940s seem much more genial and whimsical then their dandy predecessors. Still later, in the 1950s and 60s, another generation of tin men appeared—this time in the form of robots and mechanical monsters. Today's tin men come in a variety of forms. These changes can be accounted for if the stylistic aspect of tin figure production is found to correspond with the cultural exposures of the various generations of metalworkers who fostered their production.

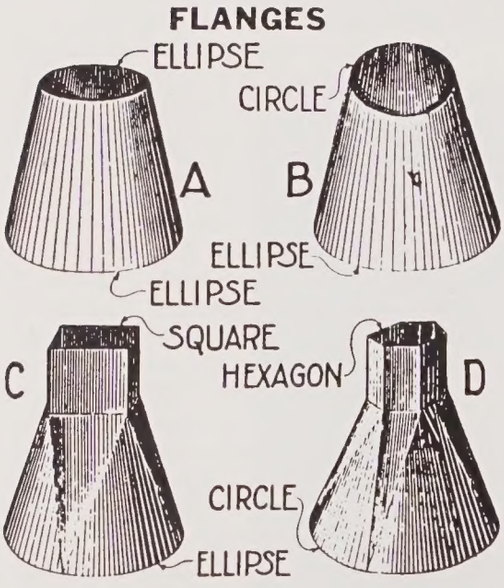
Finally, as a craft history, the tin man story requires a look inside the sheet metal work place. For after all, it is from within a trade that tin men have always come. As surely as metalworkers styled their figures in response to the popular culture around them, they also found their inspirations in something peculiar to their occupational concerns. The vocabulary of shapes commonly found in a sheet metal shop has consistently suggested figural forms to workers with creative sensibilities. As the utilitarian shapes (elbows, ventilators, caps and take offs) evolved in a changing technology, new tin man forms emerged. Against a commercial, technical and cultural skin, the heart of the tin man pulsates with popular, technological and personal inspirations.

So, a study begins with an inspection of the metalworkers' trade. Technical manuals in the profession abound with plans and shapes rife with latent figuration. Figure 2 is an illustration from a 1942 sheet metal text—a learning book filled with "how-to" diagrams. Typical manual illustrations present diagrams that aid workers fabricating the practical and the functional. To the creative eye, however, these illustrations hint that the strictly utilitarian might also become decorative, expressive, sculptural and artistic.

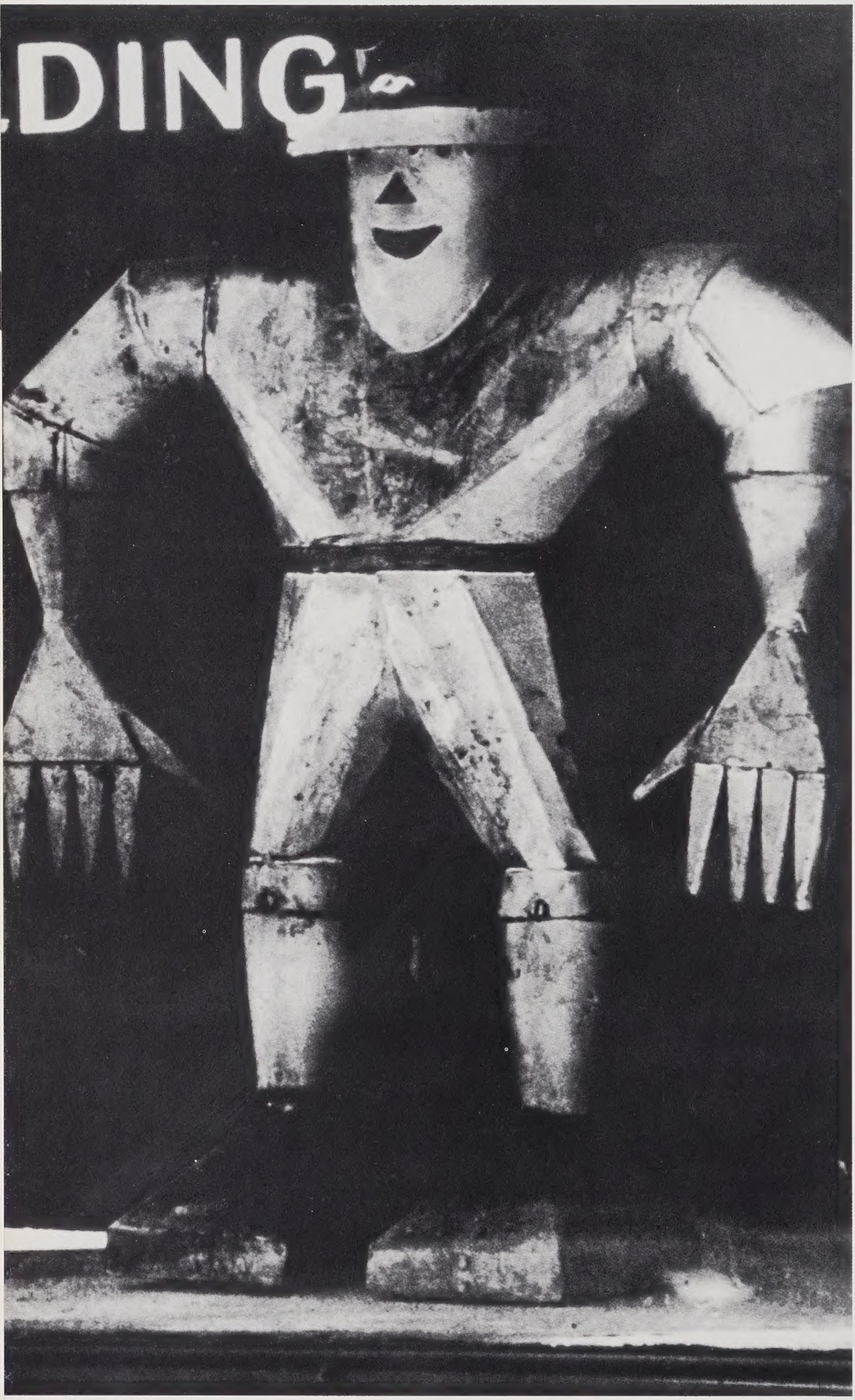
The sculptural vocabulary latent in the flange and elbow units photographed in the Rutzen-Cardon shop in Royal Oak, Michigan (*figure 3*) begs articulation as figurative art. Creatively considered, these units transform into feet and legs—the feet and legs of a tin man. In the mind of an artist/tradesman, the flanges, reducers, tubes, elbows and vents stocked in a shop combine and interlock to make a thigh that goes into a calf, a calf that goes into foot. A flared-box torso sprouts duct section shoulders; shoulders join tube arms; tapered forearms terminate in a tour-de-force breakformed hands. Voila! The great Chicago tin man—the 1940s Halstead Avenue tin man who should have been a Bears linebacker (*figure 4*).

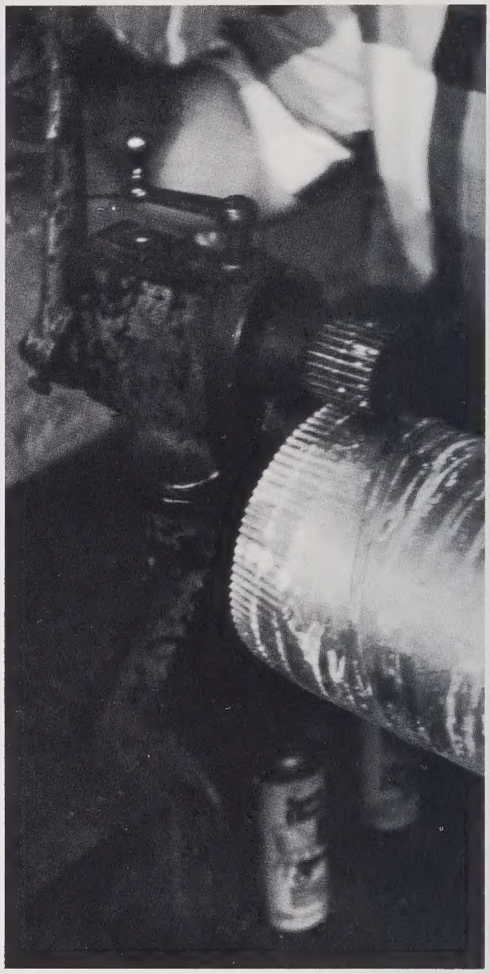
Something else related to sculpture is particular to the sheet metal trade. On the job, sheet metal craftsman must translate information from flat patterns into forms in the round. Analogous translations are also made in a few other common trades. A dressmaker working from a flat pattern stitches, pleats and tucks cloth to produce a garment that will ultimately contour around a wearer's body. Architects also expect contractors to take flat drawings and turn them into three-dimensional buildings. Looking again at a drawing from the metalworkers' manual (*figure 2*), the system of breaks, folds and crimps prescribe the forming of sculptural elements all derived from circles, cones and cubes—the very shapes Cezanne believed to be the tectonic base of all form—the irreducible building blocks of the visual world.

Tools also play a major part, as the genesis of most tin men is the ordinary hand brake. Here is an implement that will fold a piece of metal into a subtle pleated tube or into a radical right angle. Overbreaking a plate and then pressing it again, a brake operator achieves a "hemfold"—a fold that will lay a metal shape back on itself in the manner of a lapel. There is also the shear, the most basic shop tool—a tool that dictates the planar essence of the tin man. Next in importance is a machine called a beader. This simple hand-driven device creates a little raised ridge around a metal tube allowing it to interlock with other beaded units. Last, there is the crimper (*figure 5*). The crimper will texture material, but, more important, it will draw in the end of a tube—it will change a tube's diameter so that it can fit inside another tube to form a duct system. A close look at the shoulder connections on most tin men reveals a juncture executed on a crimper (*figure 6*). Improvising with such simple tools, a master sheet metal worker can modulate interlocked forms from a square into round and back again. Orchestrating an assemblage of prefab and custom-



Opposite top (Figure 2): Flanges—a typical illustration from a 1942 textbook on sheet metal working; **below (Figure 3):** Parts inventory—elbows, boots, trees and flanges in the storeroom of the Rutzen-Cardon Sheet Metal Shop, Royal Oak, MI; **above (Figure 1):** J. Krans (attributed), tin man *The Dandy*, West End Sheet Metal & Roofing Works, New York, c.1900





Above (Figure 4): Anonymous tin man, shop sign from a metalworking shop in Chicago, c.1945. Photo: Courtesy Roger Brown; **above right (Figure 5):** Crimping machine—a tool for crimping the ends of light-gauge metal tubes; **right (Figure 6):** Brian French, tin man *Uncle Sam* (detail)—a shoulder connection fashioned on the "crimper"; **opposite top (Figure 7):** W.W. Denslow, *The Tin Man Gets a Heart,* illustration from one of the original 13 *Oz* books written by L. Frank Baum, published between 1900 and 1919; **below (Figure 8):** Anonymous tin man *I'm Your Man,* Chicago area, c.1950. Collection: Mark Jackson

made units, he sculptures an image.

Technique, however, is not all. What prescribes the character of the figure a worker might construct? What determines the "look" of a particular tin man? The style of a tin man—unlike its structure—does not come from inside a shop. It does not come from a parts inventory out behind a shop. It seems to come from the larger culture around the sheet metal sculptor—the popular images incumbent upon this life/world.

Thus, the turn of the century "tin-man-cum-dandy" reflected the concerns of a world where a dandy was something one aspired to be. The anonymous sheet metal worker who built the New York dandy (*figure 1*) sought to call attention to a shop and to demonstrate the shop's technical capabilities all with a dapper sign figure built for display. A careful look at the old photo of this figure reveals that there are dozens of tiny crimps in the plate that folds around to become the dandy's coat. This plate was not put through a roller; it was painstakingly faceted on a bending brake. The coat's lapel, of course, is a clever hemfold. The dandy is a craft masterpiece fabricated by someone who really knew his stuff—someone who *could* have written the sheet metal workers' manual—*and* someone who certainly knew how to deck out a proper gent in formal attire.

All of this would change in 1939. The concept of tin men as dandies would fade from the scene. A new paradigm would emerge from a story that had been around since the year 1900, a story that became a movie in 1939, "The Wizard of Oz." Starring Judy Garland as Dorothy and Jack Haley as the Tin Man, the movie almost instantly became American popular history (*figure 7*). Post-"Wizard" tin shop figures would be mechanical and whimsical in a way not seen before. In the best sense, they would formally express their essential constructivist nature as assemblages. At the same time, they would embody a spirit of fantasy and levity directly appropriated from Haley's film portrayal in the land of Oz. It is interesting to note that even the early illustrations in Baum's Oz book show the Tin Man as a rather funky, mechanical construction—complete with a metal funnel for a hat.

Tin men after 1940 became stylistically vitalized by a new permissiveness, which shifted the esthetic of folk, sheet metal sculptors away from craftsmanly fabrication and toward found object assembly. No doubt the Oz Tin Man had something to do with this, but it is also important to note that the high art permission for assemblage in emerging modernism had reached a popular audience by the 40s. Picasso's 1931 metal sculpture *Portrait of a Woman*, sported a kitchen colander for a head. American modernists at mid-century experimenting with "junk" sculpture and the improvisional energy that Calder and other high art masters brought to their work began to find its way into American folk art—especially into the tin man maker's art.

A 1950 tin man from Chicago kneels down to work on a section of duct pipe (*figure 8*). He holds a steel snip in his hand, another shear lies near his foot. Across his chest, soldered in high relief, are letters spelling out "I'M YOUR MAN." The letters are perforated and a light bulb inserted in the figure's torso makes them illuminate at night. Day or night, this busy fellow is ready for any task. As a final touch, this figure clenches a real pipe between his tin lips. Picasso and Frank Baum would both have appreciated the sculptor who conceived this wry, spontaneous gesture.

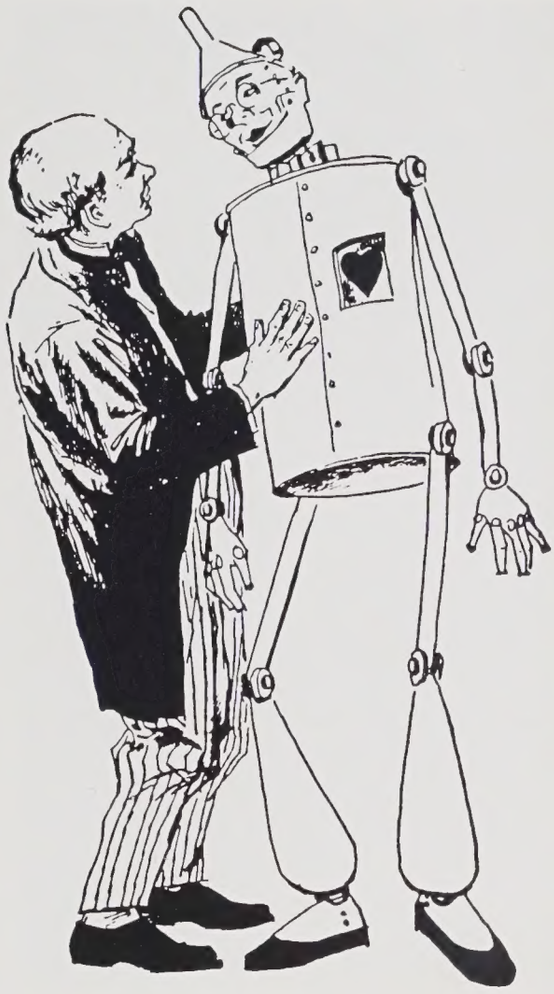
Tin men would change again in the 1950s and 60s. Metal shop folk sculptors in a changing world would respond to change. Outer space suddenly became big news and big entertainment as the second half of the century unfolded. Americans and Russians entered into serious space explorations and sci-fi writers and film makers were having a field day. Fearful, and at the same time fascinated, Americans speculated about the future *and* about what might be "out there" on other planets and in other galaxies. Upon one thing they popularly agreed: little green men always ran around in the company of metallic, mechanical monsters—robots. The era of the tin man robot had begun (*figure 9*).

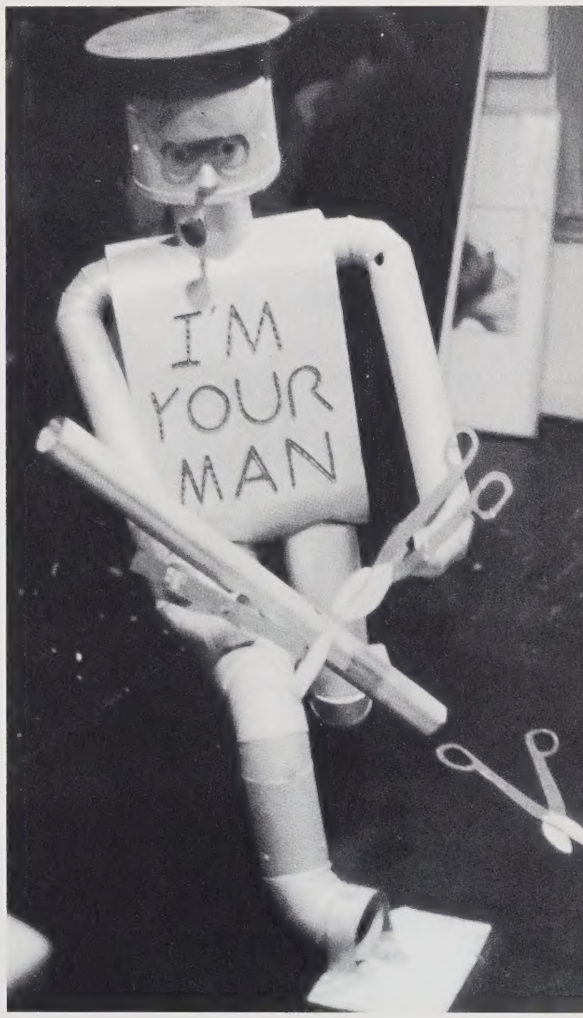
Toys and movies in this period certainly affected the style of the tin shop figures. Japanese sci-fi toys were shipped to the States by the truck load in the 50s. Menacing, but at the same time entertaining, these robot toys inspired a style of tin shop figure that was both mechanical and fanciful. From Hollywood, shop workers also derived inspiration for sci-fi creations resembling the monsters in "Forbidden Planet" or the incomparable laserblasting robot destroyer in "The Day the Earth Stood Still." In the sci-fi era, tin men became their own breed of mechanical King Kongs—oversized ventilator and duct work brutes who seem mutated from the evolution of their "dandy" ancestors.

More recent tin men evoke the reality rather than the fantasy of outer space. The Mercury astronauts made their way into orbit and returned home quite human. Their travels had, though, taken them far into a new world of technology where men and machines work as one. In the 70s the appearance of astronaut tin men signalled once again that tradesmen in metal shops draw heavily on their culture for the imagery they incorporate into their artistic work.

And what about the makers themselves? What do they think? What do they have to say about their creations? Bruno made the tin man hung on the front of the Duquet and Sons Heating Company in Highland, Michigan (*figure 10*). Asked where he got the idea to create his tin man, he replied:

> *I don't really know. I was just fooling around the shop one day and started putting various parts we had there together. I thought to myself, 'that kinda looks like a man,' so I fin-*





ished it up and took it out and fastened it to the front of the building. Do you see his hands? Well those are my hands. I drew around my hands and then cut them out and fastened them on him. I wanted him to sort of wave to people driving by.

Asked if he knew of other such figures at other shops, Bruno replied that he didn't. He turned his conversation to the problem of the rust that was forming on his "Greeter" and then excused himself to go back to work. He and the others on his crew were busy with a big job putting duct work in an apartment complex. Tin men would have to wait.

Jim, at J & J Metal Products in Warren, Michigan, made his first tin man in 1984. He has made five more since and is very proud of his handy work. He is also adamant about the originality of his tin man concept:

You know, a lot of people stop by here and ask about those figures. It's good for business. Quite a few have even tried to buy them. Can't do that though, you know, insurance just won't allow it. I'd love to let you borrow one of 'em for that thing over at Cranbrook but we just can't risk it. I could bring them all over on a truck for the students to see but it would have to be on a Sunday 'cause that's the only day I get off.

There is a lot of work that goes into one of those figures. I make all the parts myself. See those patterns back in the back of the shop? Well, they can help you lay out about any shape you want. I can read plans and fold up anything you could need. I've been in this business 40 years and learned it all the old way. We had to know how to read plans and draw things up because when I started out there weren't so many readymade parts.

I've gone to a lot of trouble to protect my idea. We even paid a lawyer to get us a copyright on these figures. I invented them and if anyone copies them I can legally sue them. There was a guy over here in a shop on Mound Road who made one and we got our lawyer on him. Made him take it apart.

Jim has his big figures weighted and mounted on hand trucks. They won't blow over in a high wind and he can wheel them into the shop every night to protect them from vandals. He has names for most of them and he even designates certain ones "summer figures" and others "winter." His newest summer figure sports a pair of very cool sunglasses (*figure 11*). Jim's favorite winter figure inspired the graphic logo printed on all the shop's promotional flyers and catalogs.

Jim is most proud of the fact that a theater cast from one of the nearby high schools asked him to build a costume to be worn by the Tin Man in their production of "The Wizard of Oz." Jim keeps photos from that "Oz" play in an album on his desk at the shop. As a metalworker and as a P.R. man, Jim is something of a wizard himself.

Looking on down the road, what else seems in store for the tin man? It is a pretty good bet that the 1977 film "Star Wars" will have a serious impact on the style of tin men of the 80s and the 90s—given the way in which popular culture affects the artistry of tin shop folk artists. The enormously appealing "Star Wars" robots, C3PO and R_2D_2, should influence the form of a yet unborn generation of tin men. Jim's latest creation (*figure 11*) may indeed be a bellwether. Jim's 1987 model goes glitz and high tech all the way. His amazing nine-foot beauty is 100% stainless steel. Flashing in the midday summer sun, this tin man shines as brightly as the golden Threepio. Checking out passing cars from behind his green rimmed shades, Jim's friendly giant exudes a poise and charm that is every bit a match for that of George Lucas's irrepressible extraterrestrials.

Elsewhere today, there is an new extended family growing from the tin man lineage. Folk artists in other metalworking trades are producing their own figurative assemblages. Since the 1970s, all manner of industrial extrusions and casting have been brazed and welded into imaginative forms by American tradesmen. Ray, a car mechanic in Cleveland, has surrounded his garage with figures he has constructed from coil springs and other automotive parts. Ray's welded munchkins hold up signs promoting Ray's professional services. In Michigan City, Indiana, Joe the welder fabricated a vast array of figures and animals out of pipe and tank sections. Joe's whereabouts today are unknown, but his sculpture can be found in yards throughout his old neighborhood. His tour-de-force is his Uncle Sam mailbox holder. Currently, it marks the driveway leading to the summer studio retreat of artist Roger Brown. In Pontiac, Michigan, Bennie Acosta built a pipe figure to grace the front of the city sewer and water building. Holding a water pail in its right hand, it sprayed water out of a nozzle fitted into its left hand. With a hat made from a dayglow traffic detour cone, Acosta's pipe man watered the plantings at the city water works. Recently, however, Acosta's "gardener" lost favor with its bosses and was unceremoniously dismantled and tossed back into the boxes of fitting from which it had originally come. Today, only a faded polaroid photo witnesses its existence.

Perhaps the strangest mutation yet in the tin man family involves the transplantation of an old folk art tradition into the world of contemporary fine art. Sculptor H.C. Westerman recently built a wire mesh tin man that ended up in the Art Institute of Chicago. He titled his piece *Jack of Diamonds*, a pun referring to the diamond-shape perforations in the expanded steel mesh from which the figure is made. Wonders of wonders—Westerman has created art that doesn't seem overly embarrassed about imitating life. His tin man could probably walk right into Jim's sheet metal shop in Detroit and be among friends.

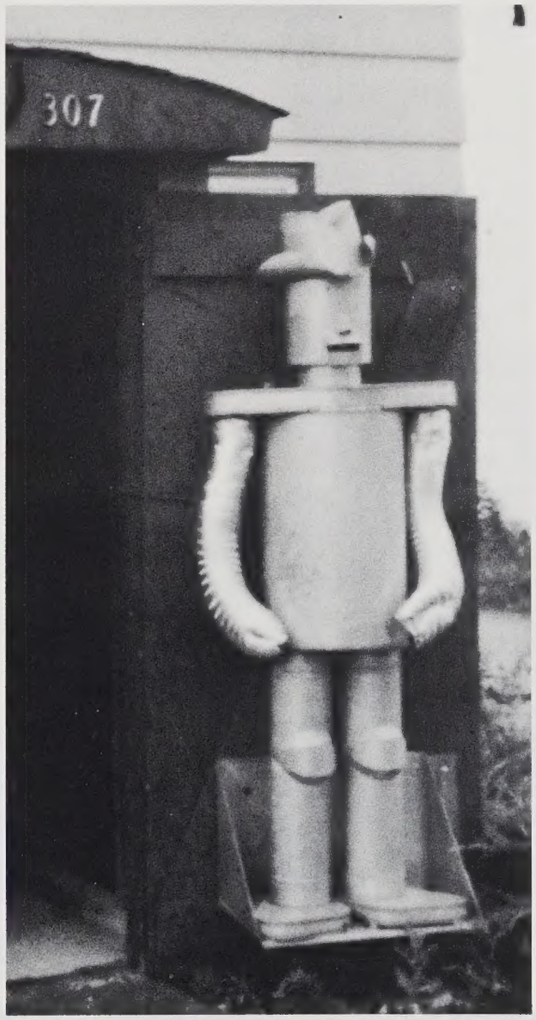
Returning to the subject of sheet metal shop figures, it is interesting to consider what lies ahead for the tin man after "Star Wars" and Westerman. Metal shop figures are already being collected as "antiques." Are they destined to join the cigar store Indians of the 19th century in the world of collectibles and nostalgia? The answer may well have to do with technology more than with issues of creativity. Sheet metal workers have obviously kept the tin man tradition alive by creatively incorporating the changes in their trade and the changes in their times into their art expression.

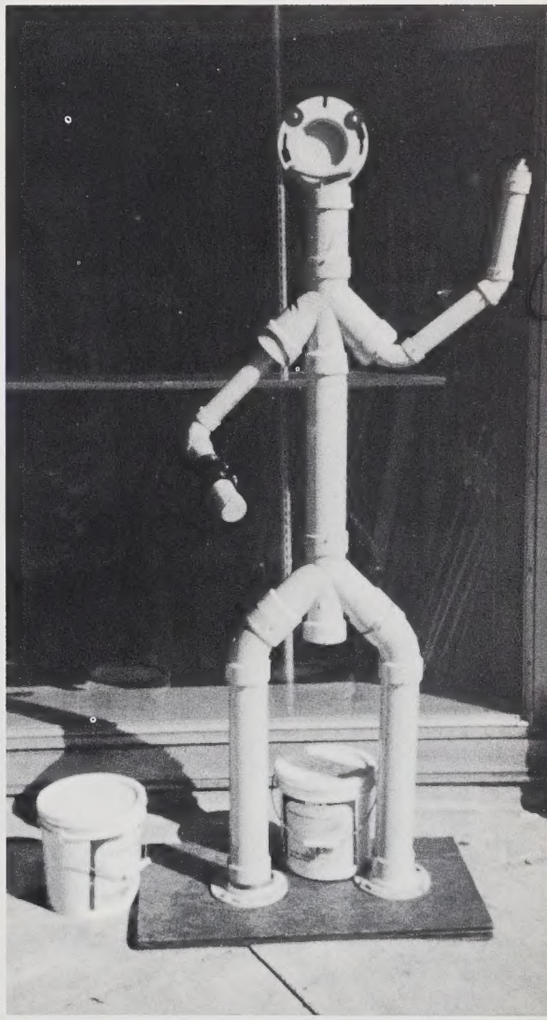
As the figurehead carvers of the early 19th century became shop figure carvers with the passing of the era of sailing ships, so too have the tin dandy makers evolved into robot makers as technology ushered in the space age. But in the end, the days of the tin man, like the days of the figurehead and the cigar store Indian, may be numbered. Small sheet metal shops are closing down. Old skills are not being passed along as pre-fab modular ventilation systems standardize the heating and cooling business—the mainstay of the sheet metal workers' livelihood. Tin men may all be off the streets by the year 2000. The best tin men today live in the outback (*figure 12*).

On the upside, meet the new kid on the block, Poly Vinyl Man (*figure 13*). In the film "The Graduate" Dustin Hoffman got the word: "The future is plastics." The tin man has proven he has a heart but he may have reached the end of his yellow brick road. And that in itself may not be all bad because maybe he was never destined to enter the gates of the new mylar "Oz" that beckons Poly Vinyl Man. Technology may simply bar the tin man from the path leading through the futuristic fields of a computer world. Or perhaps it is not so. Perhaps Poly Vinyl Man and the Tin Man may travel on together to explore an "Oz" that even the imagination of L. Frank Baum could never have reached from Kansas.

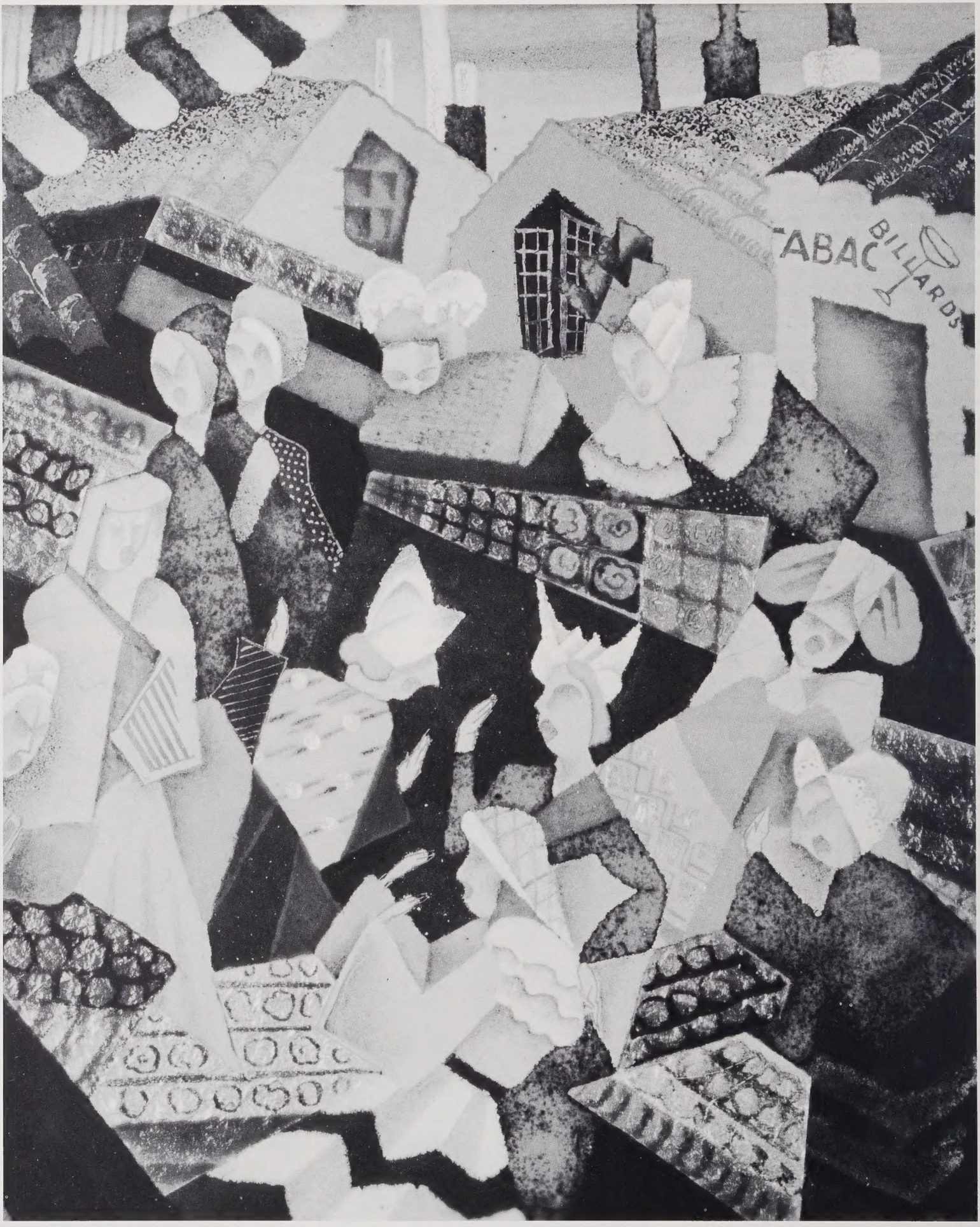
Michael D. Hall, an artist and director of the graduate program in sculpture at Cranbrook Academy of Art, is well known as a critic and collector of Americana. A book compiling his lectures *Stereoscopic Perspective: Reflections on American Time and Folk Art* has been published recently by U.M.I. Research Press, Ann Arbor, MI.

This article was originally presented to the June, 1987 conference of the Society of North American Goldsmiths at Cranbrook Academy of Art.





Opposite top (Figure 9): Parts assembly—*Summer Figure* legs detail J. & J Metal Products Co., Warren, MI; **below (Figure 10):** Bruno Polinsek, tin man *The Greeter,* Dequet & Sons Heating Co., Highland, MI; **top (Figure 11):** Tin man and friends—Jim **(right)** coworkers and Jim's stainless steel *Summer Figure,* J. & J. Metal Products Co., Warren, MI; **right (Figure 12):** Maker unknown, tin man *Cowboy,* Tri-County Heating & Sheet Metal, Spring Green, WI; this figure is door mounted so that it swings inside the shop when the building is closed. Photo: Courtesy Douglas Lowen; **far right (Figure 13):** Maker unknown, *Poly Vinyl Man* (son of tin man) hardware store sign, Seneca Falls, NY. Photo: Courtesy Gary Griffin



Above: *Argument in Limoges Market Place,* enamel on silver, copper, 8½ x 7¾", 1943. Collection: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund; **opposite right:** *Butterfly Bowl,* Bates's first enamel, won First Prize in the Cleveland May Show, 1927; **center:** *Peacock Box,* gold paillons, enamel, 4 x 4 x 4", 1930; **far right:** *Birds,* art-deco-inspired enamel, 1939

KENNETH BATES
Dean of American Enameling

by Mark Baldridge

When I asked him who Kenneth Bates is, he laughed and replied "a simple dirt farmer from New England." However, underneath his country boy smile, he's a driving creative force.

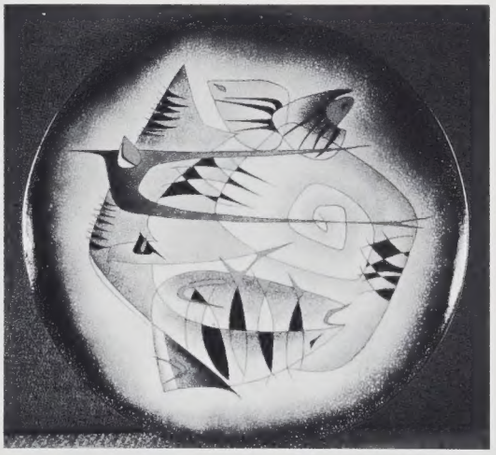
As a child, he had his own special spots in the woods where he would sit, silently observing. His love for these boyhood places comes through even today. "I had names for the rocks, rivers and ponds, the little salamanders, lizards and frogs, these things were all a part of my life. And the long hours I spent alone in the woods studying the leaves, flowers, insects and birds has greatly influenced the kind of enamels I do."

And, of course, it is his enameling that brings us to the man we know. In talking about Bates, one could list the countless regional, national and international exhibitions in which he has participated; the more than 40 awards, including three silver medals for excellence in craftsmanship he has won, the three important books he has written on design and enamels and his brilliant, dedicated 43-year career as an instructor at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Rather than such accolades, I would like to tell you about the man—his beginnings, his life, his loves and his philosophies.

Bates was born in 1904 and raised in North Scituate, Massachusetts. He was the product of a strong, self-reliant, crafts-oriented society and a small rural farming community. His great grandfather made exquisite childrens' toys; his father was an interior designer and painter; one grandfather was a carriage stripper and his other grandparents did craftwork of one sort or another. Crafts were in his blood. As a boy he did all types of handwork and knew from the fourth grade that art was his favorite subject. As a high school sophomore he determined he wanted to become an art teacher, an obvious tribute to and influence of his own art teacher, Grace Hall. Grace and her husband James were the town's artists. "She was a little queer, but I loved her very much . . . she lived on lima beans and cream, still one of my favorite foods . . . they weren't outcasts, they were just misunderstood (by the town) . . . I was greatly inspired by her." Grace determined that at age 15 Kenneth was ready for his first one-man show, so she set up an exhibit of his watercolors in her barn. Although his parents did not come, they did not try to stop him from pursuing art. "My parents could not become part of the art world; their world stopped with quilts and crocheted bedspreads."

Also influential to Kenneth was his Aunt Edith, a botany teacher who affected his love of plants. "As a boy, I would run to her with strange flowers from the woods and she would help me track them down . . . so this was my introduction to botany. By an early age I knew many Latin names of flowers and plants."

His Grandfather Milton was also a great mentor. "He thought I was an artistic boy, although he didn't quite understand me. But he humored me. For example, if I would be riding with him behind the horse-drawn mowing machine, my grandfather would stop for a clump of blackeyed Susans because he knew I wanted these uncommon flowers to take back to the house and draw." Kenneth first left the small town by bicycle for the daily two-and-a-half mile ride to catch the train to Boston where he attended the Massachusetts School of Art. At MSA, one of his instructors Laurin Martin had worked



ON ENAMELS

KB: I think sometimes enamels can be a little too dull; they should be lively. It is a medium that has a certain scintillation and there is no reason it shouldn't be bright.

MB: *Do the enamels ever control you?*

KB: Oh, yes, techniques, the actual firings controls one's work a great deal. There are many things you cannot do in enameling. There are many colors you cannot get–brilliant, lively purples, for example, are very difficult, if not impossible, certainly in an opaque.

extensively with enamels. Inspired by his work, Kenneth also perused the enamel pieces at the Boston Museum, "such things as Mandarin headdresses in blue-green enamels, like kingfisher feathers. All this seemed to have a great fascination for me and I got more and more enraptured by the technique."

Fate was on Bates's side, since the only other artist in North Scituate was Henry Turner Bailey who later became the director of the Cleveland Art Institute. Bailey was another mentor who kept close track of Kenneth as he completed his stint at MSA and additional educational degree at Berkshire School of Art. Then, Bailey immediately elevated him from North Scituate to the city of Cleveland where in 1927 he became instructor of design at the Institute of Art, then known as the Cleveland School of Art.

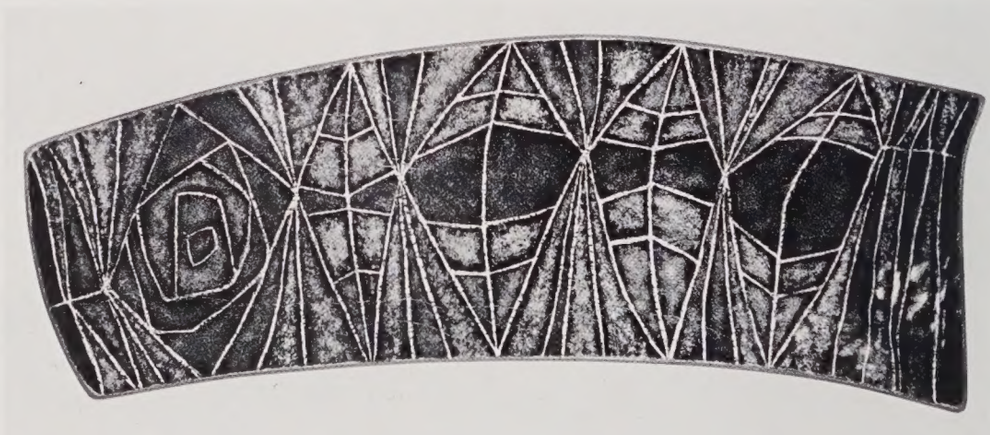
While a watercolorist at heart, Kenneth quickly discovered an overabundance of watercolorists in the Cleveland area. Whether a rational decision or intuition crystalized his fascination with color and light, that same year he sold his watercolor equipment, bought enamels and began to work. He promptly won first prize in The Cleveland Museum's annual May Show and the die was cast.

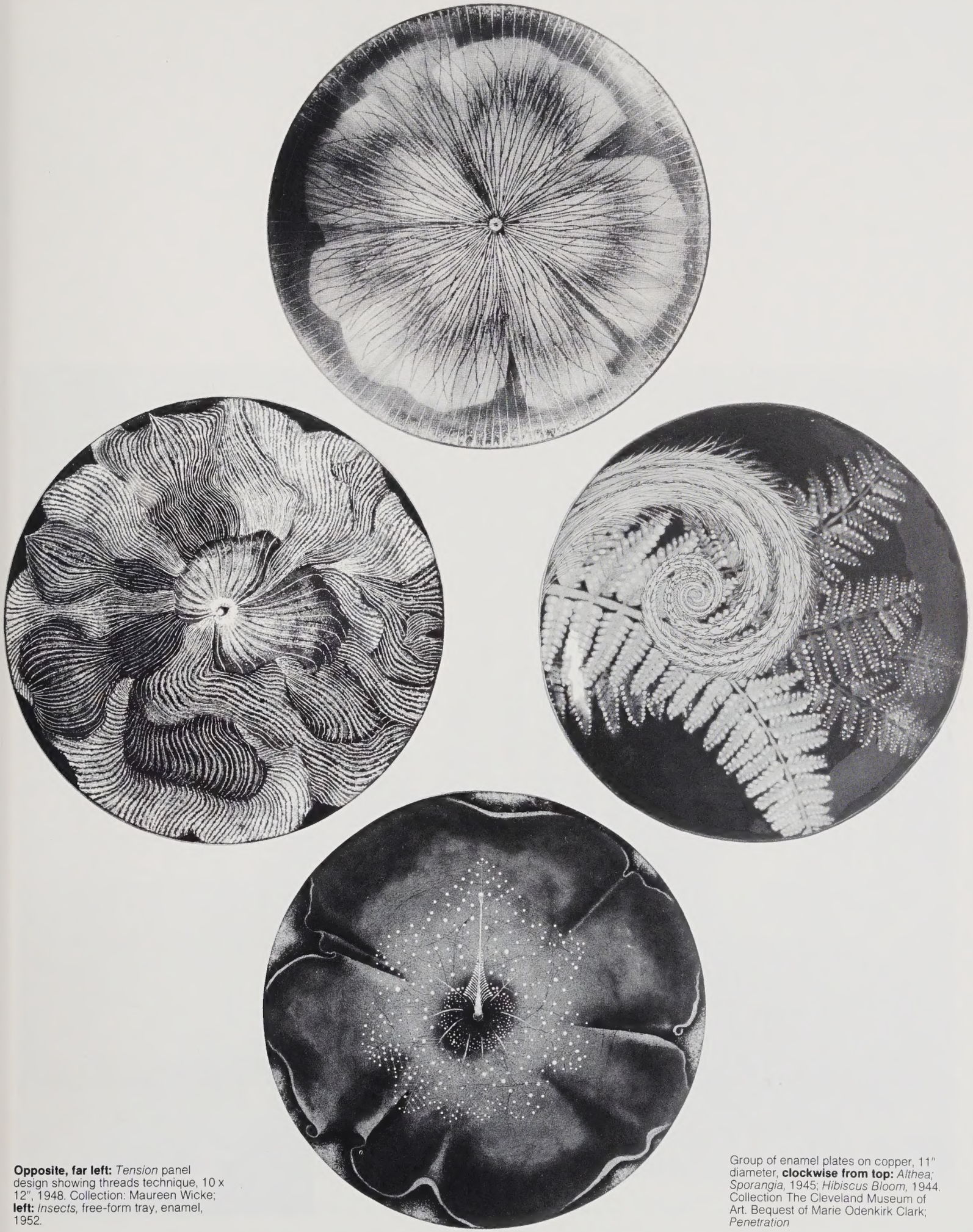
Prior to this time very little contemporary enameling was being done. Alexander Fischer was making enamels in England, but only one book on enameling was even available, *Art Enameling on Metal* written by another Englishman H.H. Cunnyngham in 1899. "That was my bible," Kenneth recalls, "but it wasn't available in colleges and universities."

His fantastic salary at the Institute ($2000 the first year) allowed Kenneth to head for Paris and the rest of Europe in search of new experiences and opportunities during the summers of 1928 and 1931. Having married a student from one of his first classes who was interested in International Style architecture, Kenneth studied at Fontainbleau while his wife studied at the Sorbonne. "Europe was probably the greatest influence of my whole career. I was exposed to a completely new kind of design, something I had never seen before. I completely changed my style. Previously I had been steeped in the Massachusetts School of Art, which taught old ways and the old things; this changed everything. I taught different things and was considered quite avant-garde."

Not only did his life and career begin to blossom upon his return from Europe, so did his family. His children Katharine, Cornelia and Benham arrived during the next four years, which necessitated the move to a house, but a typical house would not do. His wife Charlotte's architectural expertise, coupled with the European influence, inspired them to seek out Alfred Klaus to design for them an International Style house, the first of its kind in Ohio. And while it may have shocked the neighbors, it was acclaimed by those in the art field. The second floor included a glass-enclosed studio overlooking Lake Erie.

The craft world was far different in the 1930s, 40s and 50s than it is today. National craft organizations, publications, exhibitions and opportunities did not exist. Only a few museums and World's Fairs provided opportunities to exhibit. William Milliken, director of the Cleveland Museum, was a great lover of enameling and very helpful in its revival by promoting touring exhibits. The Cleveland May Shows inspired other museums around the country to run competitions. "Since $40,000 to $50,000 worth of artwork





Opposite, far left: *Tension* panel design showing threads technique, 10 x 12″, 1948. Collection: Maureen Wicke; **left:** *Insects*, free-form tray, enamel, 1952.

Group of enamel plates on copper, 11″ diameter, **clockwise from top:** *Althea; Sporangia*, 1945; *Hibiscus Bloom*, 1944. Collection The Cleveland Museum of Art. Bequest of Marie Odenkirk Clark; *Penetration*

ON SELF-EXPRESSION

KB: I try to express an idea in my work, often a rather striking colorful form or decoration, which I perceive often in travelling. I can remember a particular succulent called hen and chicks that I saw while travelling in Africa. When I got home, I immediately tried to capture it, so I suppose there is a direct inspiration.

MB: *What style do you prefer?*

KB: It isn't a matter of liking a style. I think the design is more important in each style than the style itself. I've tried all styles. I think one's own personal slant will come out; I hope you can tell a Bates when you see one.

sold the first night, other museums looked up to us and used us as a model." Once again fate smiled down on Kenneth Bates as he was affiliated with one of the most important museums in the country.

World War II had an explosive impact on the crafts. Returning veterans who had been granted free schooling under the G.I. Bill flocked back to school in record numbers. "Never in my whole 43 years of teaching did I have such a marvelous time. These young men were full of energy, vision and desire. Consequently, out of that particular era we created and brought out many of our best craftsman." World War II also signaled the end of old styles: "Here were these sentimental lamp bases with crawling ivy and wiggly-waggly vines and ladies with long, wavy hair that were not part of the times. I mean, after all, ladies didn't have long wavy hair—they had short bobbed hair. Art Nouveau was dead. Post-Expressionism was coming into being."

Spare time and a booming economy set the stage for hobbyists ready to explore new ideas and materials. Bates's first book, *Enameling, Principles and Practices*, was published in 1951. It was the first enameling book on the scene in 50 years and the only one on the American market. A thorough and comprehensive book, it took a step-by-step approach of introducing enamels to the masses and went into seven printings in seven years.

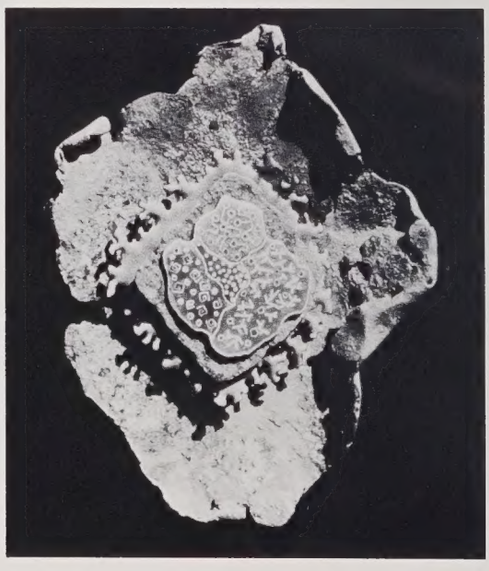
In an effort not only to assist young art students, but to upgrade the hobbyists who flocked to put butterflies and Scottie dogs in the center of enameled ashtrays, he wrote another book in 1960 entitled *Basic Design*. While simple in its approach and goals, it nevertheless remains valuable today. Most design books are difficult to comprehend and/or are irrelevant, but Bates provides down-to-earth explanations of the elements and principles and how to utilize them in an exciting manner. As Bates says, "Enameling almost fell into complete oblivion because of its prettiness. It got to be extremely popular in the 30s, done by people who otherwise had no background in art, taste or design. This nearly killed the whole discipline."

In the meantime, Bates was developing many excellent students, such as John Paul Miller, Ed Winter and Fred Miller, who used enameling in unprecedented designs. And he himself published a second enameling book in 1967. Entitled *The Enamelist*, this book was aimed at the by now growing number of advanced practitioners.

Today at the young age of 82, Kenneth is still going strong. He is still enameling 60 years after he first began. "I probably won't stop enameling until I am so decrepit I can't lift my fingers or legs to walk up to the studio. I do it because it still holds a fascination for me." This fascination is only equaled by his love for gardening and nature, and vitality for life itself.

Note: For a detailed look at the life of Kenneth F. Bates, read his book *Salome's Heritage* a delightful autobiographical "novel" about the boyhood of Kendall F. Browne. Although originally published at $8, the book is now out of print. Bates still has some extra copies, however, and for $4 to cover the cost of the book and shipping, he will send copies to interested readers of *Metalsmith*. Contact him at 7 E. 194th, Euclid, OH44119.

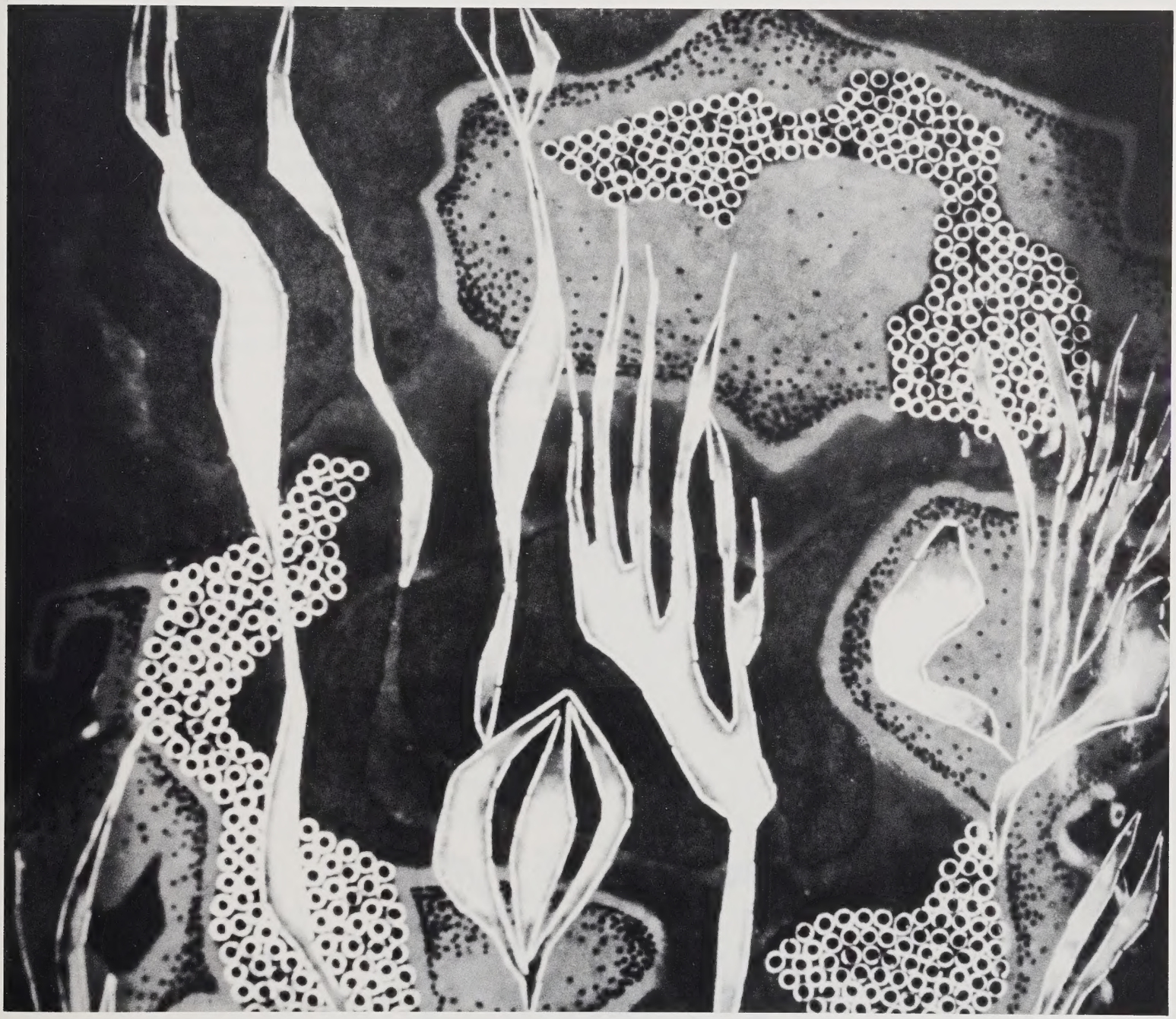
Mark Baldridge is a practicing jeweler, a professor of metalsmithing at Longwood College, Farmille, VA and former editor of *Goldsmith's Journal*.



ON GARDENING

MB: *Do you treat your garden as a work of art, trying to shape it as a design medium?*

KB: No, each flower or vegetable is an individual challenge. If I grow Swiss chard, I want it to be not only good to eat but beautiful to look at. I don't like potted plants in the house with dead blooms, so I pick them off religiously. I grow most all the vegetables in the seed catalog. I have raised exhibition dahlias since I was a small boy sometimes up to 12″ or 13″ in diameter.



Opposite, far left: *Bibelot box*, enamel and wood, 1¾ x 2⅞ x 2⅞", 1962. Collection: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Marie Odenkirk Clark; **center:** *The Vine* cloisonne box, 1964. Photo: Courtesy The Cleveland Museum of Art; **left:** Free-form shape, nonobjective influence, 1980; **above:** *The Swamp with Frog's Eggs* (detail), silver cloisonne, 1986

Thoughts on the Contemporary American Custom Goldsmith or Welcome to "Dr." Ferrini's Couch . . .

by Vincent Ferrini

About five years ago, Robert Fairbank, John Reynolds and I created a "living entity" called Goldsmiths 3 in Concord, Massachusetts. Our name simply reflects what we are: three goldsmiths, custom-designing and hand-crafting all sorts of objects in precious metals—primarily gold jewelry. We also work in sliver, platinum and precious gems.

I had previously been an associate professor of art in design and metals at Boston University and was an active participant in the academic and contemporary craft world for over 20 years. One of my dilemmas in making the transition to custom goldsmithing was the nagging question, how can I maintain creativity without the support systems of the ivory tower? I wondered about the opportunities for human interaction and the intellectual stimulation I had enjoyed as teacher and advisor. I was justifiably concerned because the care and feeding of that "living entity," the custom goldsmith studio, or any small business for that matter, requires an enormous commitment of time and energy. After a long day of goldsmithing for the paying public, who wants to shift to the home studio and try to be "creative" for oneself?

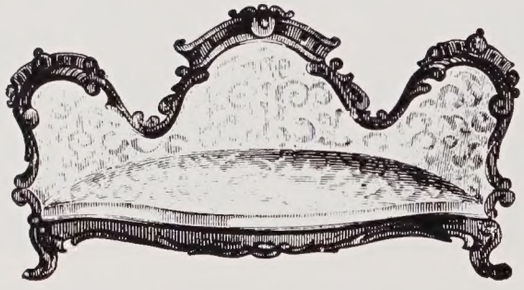
In fact, I discovered that there are more similarities than differences between the job descriptions of "academic" and "custom goldsmith," the most significant of which is that both must teach—the academic in formal classes, the custom goldsmith in relationships with clients. Further, the teaching challenge for the custom goldsmith often goes beyond that of the academic in that he is often confronted with extremely complex design requests. By this, I do not mean that people ask for objects beyond our goldsmithing capacities. Since each of us at Goldsmiths 3 has his own areas of design interest and technical expertise, we can accommodate almost any request. No, the complexity can arise in trying to figure out what "game" a client might be playing. We sometimes find ourselves refereeing a power struggle between husband and wife or mother and daughter.

Frankly, I have found that I enjoy the challenge of arriving at consensus with certain clients—a process I fondly call "design therapy." (Recognizing the danger of being labeled "pop psychologist," I'll take my chances and proceed.)

An interesting and important factor in the psychology of our business is that of the environment in which our interaction occurs. During the first three years at our current location, we had only one tiny showroom/everything room. It was reached via steep stairs and a locked door at the top landing. The space was too small for anything but intimate design consultations between one goldsmith and one or two clients. Upon the arrival of additional clients, the atmosphere was immediately filled with tension, especially if the first, seated clients had spread their prized jewels on the table for design evaluation. We often saw, to our dismay, that subsequent clients would come to the top of the stairs, stare uncomfortably at the "crush" of five or six people and flee. We now have acquired an adjacent, considerably larger room with light, airy visual access to the outside and we see and sense a vastly improved atmosphere. While one client consults with the designer in a private corner near a window, other clients can move about in either showroom and feel comfortable.

When a new client arrives, we greet her or him cordially and invite them to browse around, to get the feel of what we do through objects on display and through perusing our thick albums of photographs of the many pieces we have done for other custom clients. John photographs each new piece before it goes on display awaiting pick up by its new owner. The discerning repeat clients are used to our system of display-before-pick-up and make a point of dropping in regularly to see "what's new." The new client is advised of this system and is oriented to particularly interesting pieces or is engaged in conversation before getting down the their specific request.

Since we do selected repairs and restorations, some people use a simple repair as an introduction, and, once satisfied that we know our craft, bring in successively more complex and valuable pieces to be refurbished or completely changed, using their own gems plus new ones. If their request is small, they are usually dispatched fairly



quickly after a thorough explanation of the work to be performed, prices, time frame, etc. Frequently, this entire procedure is performed by Susan, our sales manager.

If the request is more complex, we sit down to talk, taking each other's measure. How did she or he learn of our studio? Do we have any connections, mutual friends, interests, the weather, anything to put them more at ease and to give me a chance to observe various aspects of their persona. I observe how they comport themselves, what they are wearing, their jewelry, and, especially in women clients, hair and eye color and skin tone. I am seeking a clue to a mutually acceptable design direction. By their reaction to our photo albums I further refine the design approach, and, by this time, they have revealed just what it is they want. Of course, even through we are as receptive as possible, we are not mind readers and are helped in our task by the very fact that they found our studio in the first place. In about 90% of the custom design cases, once a client has made the effort to find us, they follow through with the commission. Part of this success rate has to do with reputation through advertising and word-of-mouth recommendation and part of it is due to our subtle remove from the "mainstream," i.e., we are located in a small, elegant town about 15 miles from Boston.

Our clients also seem to know that since our work and services are special they must be prepared to pay a bit more than they would at a conventional jewelry store, especially if they want to have something custom designed. Our nonrefundable $100 design fee seldom turns people away, nor does our $500 custom-job minimum. Certainly, we do sell many objects for less than $500, but they are "case pieces" designed and made by us or a few other goldsmith friends whose work is stylistically compatible with ours. In this category are many one-of-a-kind pieces plus some limited-series items. These pieces satisfy the impulse buyers, especially at holiday time.

Despite the fact that each custom client's requirements are unique, there are several categories of clients and products that make up the bulk of our business. First are the wedding-ring clients. Over 50% of our custom business involves the design of usually three rings per couple, who, although usually well-educated, very well-paid and "self-confident" young, urban professionals, still cling to the tradition of ring sets. There is the engagement ring ("We want something different"), usually set with diamonds or a diamond with sapphires, rubies or emeralds. The accompanying wedding bands are in related styles, one for her and one for him. Their tastes vary somewhat within a rather narrow range of "something different," and they come to us partly because they have been turned off by the offerings of more "commercial" jewelry stores but mostly because they like to feel discerning and aware of the best-quality products available.

I am sure that we all recognize the trend toward costly designer labels in everything from cars to castles. Perhaps we have become a "designer label," at least locally, because we have never been busier. Or, perhaps we are simply beneficiaries of the long-term American crafts revival. I am convinced that part of these particular client's design and quality awareness is the result of their having attended schools and colleges where contemporary crafts programs flourish and where many of them had taken such courses themselves. Some of them come in pointedly discussing "bezels," "cabachons," "married-metals" and other contemporary metals buzz-words like "electro-colored titanium"; Wow! At any rate, despite their occasionally annoying know-it-all and want-it-all attitudes, these younger (usually first-time-to-be-married) clients respond to a warm and sincere approach. I dispense homilies about the "married condition" along with the advice that diamonds are usually not such a terrific investment (and still they want them, tradition is that strong).

The search for older values might also account for a peculiar phenomenon we have dealt with of late, that is, the popularity of my own wedding ring for the young male who does not respond to other, more "designed" rings. My ring has evolved with my marriage of 21 years. It was originally a 7.5mm band of 14k yellow gold with an overlayer of textured, squarish shapes (very "early 60s"). It caught on towels, etc., so I hammered it and fused the pieces a bit more. Then I put on a lot of weight and hammered it to stretch it. I've gardened with

Robert Fairbank, *Ring*,
18k yellow gold, diamonds, tourmaline, cast, 1987

it on, I've done carpentry, pottery, you name it, and then, for the final touch, I lost weight and cut the ring down to its original size! Well, of course, that's the ring they want. Perhaps the telling of the story is what sells the ring, or perhaps its lack of slickness is what appeals, especially since our method of reproducing it assures the client of getting his ring only similar in feeling to mine, therefore, a true one-of-a-kind. Whatever the reason, I find the homage to my cherished, clunky ring, touching.

The second- and third-time-around couples come in with slightly more unusual design requests than the first-timers. When they ask for something "different," they mean it because they have already done the conventional thing, and found that it didn't work for them. They are less likely to want three rings, often choosing simple, sculpted bands for each partner. Recycled gems often appear in this category and are sometimes relegated to use in something other than the wedding rings, such as the perfect four-carat diamond, which became the centerpiece for a lady's seldom-removed gold chain, "choker" length. I often wondered in this case, who was doing the choking, the "ex" who paid for this talisman of love lost or the new mate who obviously could not afford such a bauble but had to see it every day hence. Odd though some requests might be, I prefer working with these more seasoned clients because their established quirks and tastes provide more opportunity for innovative solutions and frankly, fun. One delightful couple had included in their new relationship a switch from Judaism to Buddhism and requested wide, delicately pierced and carved bands of lotus leaves and blossoms. Another, a big, strapping gentleman, proud of his Celtic heritage, requested a ring with a "Celtic-feel." The result of our collaboration is a handsome, wide band of white gold, pierced on the inside with several words from his personal philosophy and then overlaid on the outside with "Celtic" spirals and waves of white gold and 22k yellow gold accents. This was great fun to do.

Usually, the relationship between couples becomes evident during the first design session and certainly by the model-fitting stage or second contact hour. However, sometimes any "games" they might be playing takes a little longer to understand and consider in the design and "therapy" process. Most of the young couples are simply "in love" and desirous of pleasing each other. The norm seems to be to have lived together for at least a year and now wish to make a commitment. Sometimes we see traits and interactions that make us want to say, "Watch out!" "This union is headed for disaster!" But, of course, we can say nothing. However, by the time a couple is working on marriage #2 or #3 we sometimes see some fascinating power plays.

One such recent experience concerned a couple in their early 40s, both second-timers, both independent, very successful professionals. They were playing, "Me, big, strong, demanding male. You, small, subservient female. . . ." He insisted upon choosing her ring, but not she his. He chose a very demure little number when it was clear to me that she really wanted something more interesting. She acquiesced "sweetly" and I was left, mouth agape. Was this the same assertive, decisive and independent woman who had come in initially, alone, to arrange the design session? Had she hinted to me that she wanted help in getting the ring she preferred, I would have tried various persuasive tactics in her behalf, but she hinted at nothing. Either she is a very clever lady with a subtle agenda or, her need for security and love causes her to settle for domination.

Another couple developed their maturation-of-relationship stint in just a few short weeks of our acquaintance. Initially, he was a classically, maddeningly indecisive type, fussing over every detail of the design of her ring, using up hours of my precious time! With the exception of the very substantial ruby and diamonds she agreed to, she shyly deferred to his leadership. The final design was his. It certainly had ceased to be mine! There comes a point in this process when you realize that, "This one is not going to appear in the design book." What started out to be crisp and elegant became blousey and awkwardly conventional, but he was delighted at the result. She said little. However, upon their return visit some months later for wedding ring designs, she ran the show. They were in and out in record time, he saying, "Yes, dear. I think they will be just right." Incidentally, she had been married before and he, at about age 40,

Vincent Ferrini, *Ring,*
18k white gold, 22k yellow gold, 1986

had not. He was, in fact, so subdued that even the "therapist" could not resist a little swipe at him (retribution for frustration): When he began whining about the possibility of his band turning on his finger, I fairly snapped, "Of course it will turn! All bands turn!" And, that was that.

Certainly, we deal with sentimentality. Besides tradition, sentimentality is the next most important aspect of our profession. We tenderly rejuvenate grandma's worn-out rings. (Woe betide us for one slip, one chip. What was a cordial relationship between client and goldsmith can turn instantly into a vicious, ugly scene if some accident befalls a cherished "heirloom," or some misunderstanding occurs concerning intrinsic value or money in general. The exchange of money is always the barrier between truly open friendships and mere business friendships.) On the positive side, we build into some pieces private signs and symbols that have tremendous meaning for the giver and recipient, and during the research and design process we come to know intimate details of the individuals' lives.

A piece clearly representative of our capacity for interpreting sentimentality is the 18k yellow gold bracelet, hollow constructed and hinged, repousséd with Swiss mountain scenes in memory of a long, happy marriage, which included travel and lots of mountain climbing in Switzerland. Its owner, a very dear lady, nearly 90 years old, commissioned it as an "heirloom" to pass on to her grandchild. I was deeply moved by this experience. There are far too many examples of sentimentally inspired pieces to mention here, some as funky as an actual ¼″ top slice of champagne cork from some auspicious occasion made into a money clip, and others are delicate and sublime as two of grandma's rings, a thin pink gold one and a thin white gold, each set with a small diamond intertwined with two thin bands of yellow gold for a grandaughter's new marriage.

The most troublesome design problems are those in which the parameters are not clear because some sort of power play is afoot between two (or more) clients. One such situation occurred recently between a mother and daughter (and, as was subsequently revealed, the whole family). Daughter (adult, married, professional) came in alone to commission a new ring setting for grandma's two-carat diamond, which she had been given. The ring, a simple, bold sweep of 18k yellow gold was enthusiastically approved during the design stages, drawings, models, etc. Upon completion, however, daughter was a bit apprehensive at its "modern look," but after gentle counseling, went away happy, wearing the ring. Next visit, some months later, in came daughter with mother, whom I had not yet met. Mother was clearly annoyed. She started attacking the design of daughter's ring. We got into a terse discussion about what constituted "gracefulness," she insisting that her flat, wide band with two-carat diamond in the center was more graceful then her daughter's ring, and so forth. A struggle ensued, daughter tried, with my help, to assert herself. Mother declared that "the whole family disliked the new ring." The therapist "lost it" momentarily and replied frostily, "Had I known I was designing for a committee, I might have approached it differently, or perhaps not at all!" They soon left, having half-refused to accept my offer to take back the ring, but pay me design time for a new one. As far as I know, the ring still sits, perhaps uneasily, on daughter's finger. It is important to note that we could get into similar scrapes with relative ease over various misunderstandings with clients or between clients but we try very hard to leave serious intrapersonal tangles alone, thus separating us from true psychotherapists who might be just getting warmed up at this point in the relationship.

Not all family-connected experiences are so perilous. I have several families as long-term clients who simply do all their jewelry business with us, without question. We are "their" goldsmiths. I don't know whether or not some of them refer to us privately as "those nice little men who make our jewelry for us," but I don't think so. Rather, our relationship has been built and strengthened over a period of 20 years or more with commissions covering every family occasion, from wedding rings to baby spoons to anniversary gifts to second-generation wedding rings. There is a wealth of trust and understanding between us. In some cases, the relationship has taken on the character of collector and artist and it is indeed gratifying to review each collection for evidence of design

Vincent Ferrini and Robert Fairbank, *Bracelet*, 18k yellow gold, repousse, 1985

development and growth.

For example, for one client two "show stoppers" (client's words) were made in 1967 and 1987. The client was always desirous of providing something strikingly unusual for his attractive and socially prominent wife to wear. They both enjoyed the "game," and I enjoyed their admiration and patronage. Since I have always found it difficult to make elaborate pieces without a client in mind, their support made it possible for me to make some of my most important works. Even now, a few years after this gentleman's demise, his wife keeps up the tradition, more as a friend and art patron than as someone who "needs" more of anything. It is this love and respect between client and artist that is the spiritual food that keeps me going, not the money. Another such artist-patron relationship concerns an extensive collection of pieces featuring fine opals. These client-friends' unflagging support has enhanced my reputation for unusual opal settings and has inspired many other people to come to me for similar work.

Perhaps the most important question, eventually asked when designing, making and buying jewelry is, "How much is it worth?" Implication: how much am I worth? This question can be simply interrogative or it frequently is rhetorical. Figuring out why and how it was asked and the concomitant layers of meaning is where the fun lies for the designer-therapist. Scenario: a fortyish wife comes into the studio bearing a large, costly sapphire, "a gift from her husband." Our ensuing discussion reveals that wife received it for some unspecified "payment" from husband and wants to combine it with other gems in a lavish bracelet (seemingly too lavish for wife's unprepossessing appearance and demeanor). A subsequent joint visit, a design session, reveals a relatively handsome husband with what seems, to me, like a tell-tale twinkle in his eyes for other ladies. Wife pushes on, relentlessly, in her pursuit of other gems of "sufficient size" and "value"—sufficient value for what? Husband makes no protest as she repeatedly asks, "How much?" and "Don't you have bigger ones?" Eventually, size and value match up to her hidden-worth agenda and she stops bidding, seemingly satisfied that the "deal" has been consummated. This was an embarrassing, but not all that unusual experience for the designer-therapist. However, all that one can do in cases like this is try to alleviate the woman's quiet desperation and make something as beautiful as possible and hope that she feels somewhat assuaged.

I am fascinated by women, not just because they are the opposite sex but as enormously interesting human beings. I appreciate their sensitivities and creativity but am especially attuned to their vulnerability in the face of societal demands and expectations concerning physical beauty and its lore. Too many women are cowed by the "need" to be beautiful at all costs, giving rise to cruel stereotyping and the like. Therefore, we, who are in the business of creating objects for personal adornment, have an obligation to be as honest, direct and supportive as possible. Not lost to the sensibilities of most men in the business of catering primarily to women is the simple fact that we are men. The time we casually spend talking to, listening to and enhancing the "beauty" of our ladies is often enormously important to them and like the relationship of a true therapist and patient, it can lead to momentary infatuations, sometimes even for the therapist.

Some women are so compellingly beautiful that any jewelry I might make for them seems redundant to me. One such lady came into our studio recently, a statuesque creature of incredible vibrancy with the richest, dark, chocolate-colored skin, dark brown velvet eyes, a flashing smile and proverbial "ruby lips." I was so dumb struck by her natural beauty and grace that my normally glib tongue was tied into knots. Perhaps I shall be able to design something to enhance her sensual beauty, a flash of gold here or there. Even though I do not feel that she needs much help, she must feel that she has a personal equation that needs balancing. Soon afterward, another "brown" lady came in, this one not racially brown, but mouse-brown in dress and demeanor. She is an accomplished professional of early middle age, obviously intelligent and well-paid, enough to afford a rather expensive ring, a resetting of her own, much cherished, brilliant blue-green gem-chrysocholla. Upon discussing her design requirements, I sensed that her self-esteem as an attractive female also

Vincent Ferrini, *Pin,* 14k gold, citrine, 1967

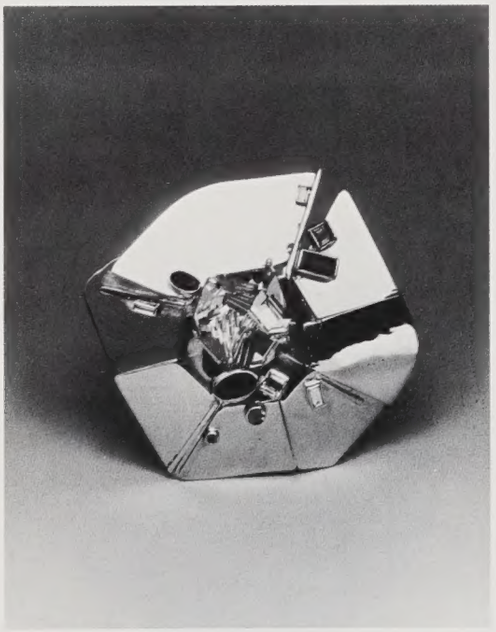
needed resetting. She seemed a little sad and needlessly self-depreciating. She implied that since she was still "single" that she might as well buy herself a nice ring. I felt that her self-assessment was quite wrong and that she was warm, sincere and witty and somehow missing her attractiveness potential. I approached the design task with genuine zeal—my mission, to lift her spirits. I made the piece a bit more opulent than its price warranted because I had become emotionally involved in its success as a mood elevator. It worked! The ring turned out to be simple and elegant but large and bold enough to be symbolic of a change she was seeking. She came in to pick it up, dressed in her characteristic brown, but in a very nicely cut dress, her soft brown hair swept into a flattering wave. At first, she gasped at its size and the visual impact of brilliant, blue-green against the richness of 18k yellow gold. She then put it on and beamed with delight, as did I. A lively conversation ensued about color and we decided that with her customary browns she should try more, strong blue-green and gold. I produced a multiple strand of such beads belonging to another client for her to try on, the resultant "beauty enhancement" and spirit lifting a joy to witness. She eventually left the studio, fairly dancing with resolve to do some image changing.

Male clients are not only fewer in number but are usually shopping for someone else, usually a female. However, when they are shopping for themselves they can often exhibit the same kinds of insecurities about self-image. Only, as "men," they are compelled to mask their sensitivities as much as possible. Sometimes,the mask slips and we get a glimpse of the little boy underneath, the little boy who needs to feel big and strong, so he needs a big, strong ring. This ring should tell about his accomplishments (largely monetary), therefore it should be quite valuable. Males are generally more tentative in our "jewelry store" environment, perhaps viewing it as a female preserve. They are sometimes tentative about us, as, although we are also males, we design jewelry. Are we sometimes scrutinized for our "orientation?" Since we don't wear gold-lamé jumpsuits we usually pass inspection and can get on with business. Most often, however, the male client is simply a bit awkward about selecting the "right" thing and seems grateful for sincere interest and advice. I am particularly pleased to work with those young men, perhaps a few years older than my son, who are idealistic and romantic enough to buck the trend of joint ring shopping and pointedly choose or help design a surprise for their fiancé or wife. Usually, the gamble pays off and the lady is thrilled, but there have been some incidents where the hard-hearted lady has returned the proffered love-token and dashed both males' romantic notions.

Some older males are as zealous and firm about a pair of earrings as they would be about a serious stock deal. They have clearly done their homework and toss around the lingo, letting us know that they know a carat from a carrot (and implying that we had better not try anything shady with them). Some of this feistiness is only macho posturing but on occasion we have suffered the indignity of someone requesting to be present when we unset and reset their gemstone. Some jewelers and goldsmiths get furious at this affront, but I choose a different approach. I reason that this negative attitude about slippery jewelers must have originated from a few real episodes of cheating and that this lore needs correcting by example. So, after mildly scolding the suspicious client, I invite him (or her) into my work room to witness the procedure, all the while delivering a lecture on the care with which we do our work, the stupidity of anyone who would try to switch a client's stones, plus a dash of discussion about "trust," and then a look into the gemscope for identifying marks and color. Thus reassured, these clients often become some of our best repeat customers.

Male or female, rich or not-so-rich, young or old, our clients form a fascinating stream of intrapersonal relationships that add a very special dimension to our profession, causing the days and weeks to fly by with never a dull moment.

Vincent Ferrini is a custom goldsmith and partner in Goldsmith's Three in Concord, MA.



Vincent Ferrini, *Pin,* 22k yellow gold, 14k white gold, aquamarine, tourmalines, diamonds, 1987

Patination for Small-Scale Studio Use

by Charles Lewton-Brain

In recent years there has been an increased interest in patination and metal coloring. This may be seen as a response to the use of nonprecious metals in jewelry. A trend towards objectmaking in North America has produced relatively large surface areas in base metals that invite patination of various kinds.

Richard Hughes and Michael Rowe's monumental work *The Colouring, Bronzing and Patination of Metals* appeared in 1982, providing carefully researched compilation of coloring solutions and application methods superior to anything previously available on the subject. However, many of the solutions and chemicals are unsuitable for the average small studio. Some are toxic and corrosive and others impractical to make because of difficulties in obtaining small amounts of the required chemicals.

This abbreviated paper addresses the need for simple, less toxic solutions for small-scale studio use.[1] Since there are thousands of solutions, pastes and atmospheres that affect metal surfaces, there is often more than one method of achieving the same or similar color on a specific metal. As this paper is intended as an introduction to metal coloring, basic procedures are emphasized.

Patinated surfaces should not be worn in contact with the skin or used in anything connected with food. Many patinas are toxic if ingested and may cause skin irritation in close or constant skin contact. Protective sealers are often used with patinas. They must be used if the object will be in body contact. The irresponsible use of patinations in the fashion industry is likely to lead to a backlash when the first major skin reactions occur in customers. When used in jewelry, patinas should be isolated from all surfaces in skin contact. They must adhere well to the metal and be properly sealed.

Natural patinas formed on copper alloys vary with the environment. Industrial environments tend to produce a copper sulfate base, the ocean a copper chloride base and the mountains a copper carbonate base. Varying conditions produce combinations of these and others. Natural patinas include:

Black	Copper Sulfide	$Cu_2 \bullet CuS$
Bright Blue	Copper Hydroxide	$Cu(OH)_2$
Green-blue	Basic Copper Carbonate	$CuCO_3 \bullet Cu(OH)_2$
Green-blue	Basic Copper Sulfate	$CuSO_4 \bullet 3Cu(OH)_2$
Green	Basic Copper Chloride	$CuCl_2 \bullet 3Cu(OH)_2$

These patinas take four to 30 years to develop well, depending on the location.[2] All of them can be produced faster with chemical treatments. The best durability, color control and speed of application are produced using solutions and patinas that rarely occur in nature.

The oldest traditional method of obtaining green patinas on copper alloy surfaces was to expose them to urine, often aged to developed a stronger ammonia content. Works have been buried in manure, coated with pastes containing urine or sealed in urine atmospheres. I have heard of a Korean metalsmith who had over 40 dated jars of aged urine in his workshop, the older ones being more prized. Diet and physical condition would add minerals, salts and chemical compounds to the solution and subtly affect metal surfaces. Burial in alkaline or acidic earths has also been used to create patinas and may be considered a kind of paste application.

Opposite: *Pin,* copper, silver fused to surface acting as resist to ammonia fumes, 24k gold, tsavorite, Walrus ivory, 7cm d., 1986. **Above:** *Four pins,* cupric nitrate patina, gold ink 12cm d., 1983; **top:** urine for three days

Patination agents included in this paper are clear household ammonia, vinegar, table salt and cupric nitrate. Ammonia and vinegar produce good results as fumes. Salt functions as a direct corrosive agent. A combination of salt and ammonia fumes makes for fast results but adhesion is not as good as with the cupric nitrate patina.

In order to organize the materials, we will deal with the process in the order in which the patination proceeds: Cleaning; Application Techniques; Masking; Chemical Agents; Hot Applications; Color Options; Protective Coatings.

Cleaning

A clean surface is essential. All mineral and organic oils, greases and oxidation must be removed. The process chosen should activate or roughen the metal surface

There are four common methods for cleaning the surface: chemical, solvent/detergent, mechanical and electrolytic. One or more of these techniques may be required in any given situation.

- *Chemical.* The article is fully annealed and pickled in a conventional acid pickling bath. This may not remove all of the oils present. This process would typically be followed by abrasive treatment and/or cleaning with solvent or detergent.
- *Solvent/Detergent.* Cleaning in strong solvents or a warm mixture of household ammonia and detergent may be required to remove all traces of grease and oils. For safety reasons, ammonia and detergent are preferred.
- *Mechanical.* The mechanical process removes oxides and oils and roughens the surface. This increases the surface area to provide improved reactivity and adhesion. Pumice, wet or dry abrasive paper and sandblasting are effective mechanical treatments.
- *Electrolytic.* This type of treatment would include both electrocleaning and electrostripping. A simple electrocleaning solution is:

Sodium carbonate	50g
Trisodium phosphate	25g
Sodium hydroxide	25g
Water	200ml

The solution is used at 60–70C. and a current density of 1-3A/dm2. The work is treated for 1–3 minutes as a cathode and 5–10 seconds as an anode. Dip in 1:10 sulfuric acid to neutralize the electrocleaning solution and activate the surface (15 sec.).

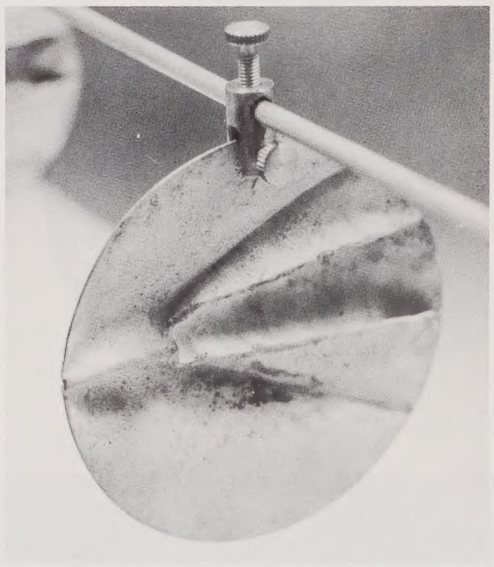
Rinse well in running water.

The clean part may be stored for a period of time in distilled water to inhibit the reformation of oxides.

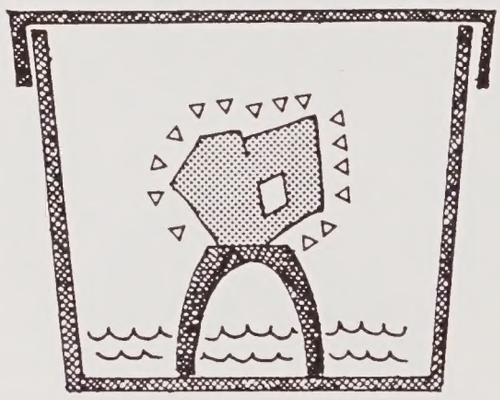
Application Techniques

The final appearance of the object is influenced by both the chemical agents used and the application technique. The following details some of the typical applications methods.

- *Cold Fuming.* This technique produces an even color except where condensation causes pooling on the surface. Place the object on a platform (to keep it out of the patination agent) in a closed plastic container or bag and pour the agent on the bottom of the container. It is sealed and allowed to react with the metal. Cold fuming works well for ammonia and vinegar.
- *Painted Solutions.* The solution is painted on with a swab or brush. A small amount of wetting agent (detergent or alcohol) aids in obtaining even results. The metal dries and the process is repeated until the results are satisfactory. Heat may be used to accelerate the process. Suitable for salt solutions and cupric nitrate patina.
- *Sprayed Solutions.* This method may be used to obtain an even or speckled effect. Repeated applications and time yield good results. Keep applications light. Spraying works well for salt and cupric nitrate solutions.
- *Bound Materials.* When a porous material moistened with a patination agent comes in contact with a metal surface, a reaction occurs at the contact points. An object may be wrapped in cloth or string to utilize this effect. Organic materials such as feathers and plants may be bound to the object. If tightly bound, surface activation is prevented and outlines are emphasized. Dry materials bound to the surface and exposed to ammonia or vinegar fumes act as resists. The agents soon permeate the binding medium, and etching as well as patination may take place at the contact points. If brass is left in contact with ammonia or vinegar for long periods of time, it will become fragile and crumble with light pressure. Use other metals for structural elements if using these agents on work.
- *Pooling.* If the agent is pooled on the metal it reacts locally. Grease (fingerprints) can emphasize pooling effects. The edges of pools will react differently than the centers.
- *Immersion.* The object is immersed in the solution. This method is inappropriate for ammonia or vinegar but may work with salt solutions.
- *Moistened Shavings.* Damp (not wet) wood shavings or other porous materials work well for differential patination/etching of surfaces. Again, contact points are the focus of action, an example being the polka dots produced by hamster cage cedar shavings. Etched texture is possible on copper alloys with ammonia and vinegar. Possible media include resin-free sawdust and shavings (no oak either), peanut shells, kitty litter, styrofoam balls or chunks, crushed cork, sisal or coarse fibers, pin needles, grass, leaves, straw, etc. Use in a sealed container. The pieces may be shaken to obtain a randomized effect. Rowe and Hughes suggest making a dam of modeling clay to contain the moist media to obtain patterns or mask areas.[3]



Detail of object, copper disc with cupric nitrate patina, 5cm d., 1986



Object on platform sealed in fume

Cupric nitrate brush application pattern

Masking

Tape, wax, lacquers and other resists may be used with these agents. Layered metals like mokume, doublée and selectively plated surfaces can be considered as a type of resist. Different reactions occur when the various metals are exposed to the agent. Gold is nonreactive and serves as a good resist. It retains its bright yellow color against the green of the base metal below. "Gold Painting," a gold fusion technique on copper, provides a useful way of developing patterns using gold as a resist.

Chemical Agents

Next we will consider some common agents. Clear household ammonia produces greens and blues on copper alloys, olive greens on bronze. It works best in thin films. This may be provided by treating the object in an ammonia atmosphere with a damp surface. (Without prior dampening it will condense on the metal.) If the metal is wetted with a salt solution rather than water, a bright blue is produced in about two hours. If left overnight, it intensifies but is far less adhesive. Vinegar works in a way similar to ammonia. Moistened shavings work well as an application technique.

Salt may be sprinkled as dry crystals and then left in a humid place (laundry room) to react with the metal. A day or more is required. Solutions of salt produce varied results. Salt patina is characterized by variegated bright green and orange on copper. Salt also works well in combination with other solutions and fumes. An example is the Rowe/Hughes solution #3.129 (cupric nitrate 200g, salt 200g, water 1000ml),[4] which may be applied hot or cold and produces azure and orange surfaces. This produces a loose patina good for non-wearable work, unless well sealed or built-up.

The balance of this paper will deal with the application of cupric nitrate patinas. This general-purpose patina may be applied hot or cold and may be built up to cover surfaces evenly with excellent adhesion. The solution is most easily applied to brass but holds better on copper. It is a surface covering and may be used on silver, nickelsilver, bronze, steel, iron and even gold. *Caution:* a good fume hood is necessary when working with this chemical. Nitric acid fumes are released (corrosive, irritant) and the possibility of metal-fume poisoning exists. Plans for a small-scale fume hood for patination designed by Theo Jansen and James Evans

are available from the Ontario Crafts Council in Canada.[5] To test air-flow speed use a smoking rope to see the draft in action. The smoke should rise at an angle of no more than 10° from the metal as it moves toward the vent. Rubber gloves and cleanliness are essential. This patina should not be used on surfaces next to skin. No eating, drinking or smoking when working with this patina. The steps in the application are:

1. Prepare metal. Rub well with pumice to remove oxides and roughen surface to aid mechanical adhesion.
2. Clean metal to remove grease and oil.
3. Place flat work on heated plate. If the work is three-dimensional, place it on clean firebrick on turntable to heat evenly with torch flame.
4. Moisten felt pad and brush it on almost dry. The solution should dry instantly. If spraying, a light touch is suggested. Spraying on hot metal is especially dangerous, waste is high and containment of excess spray essential.
5. Heat surface until it turns darker, to brown. Expose it to a flame, burning the layer on, turning it black. Too much heat burns off the layer.
6. With a stiff brush under running water remove all loose material and repeat until the surface is an even green. The removal of loose material is what leads to good adhesion in the finished surface. To obtain a mottled effect scrub harder or don't clean well before starting. A dip in a 2% hydrogen peroxide solution between applications improves adhesion. To dry use a gentle heat.

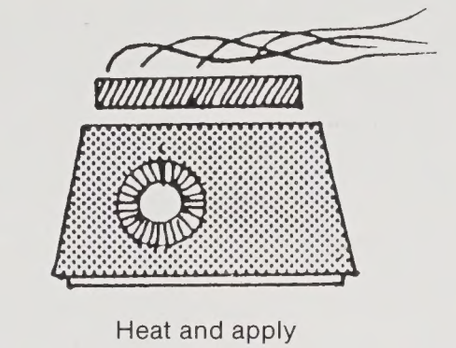
Repeated applications and removal of all loose material by scrubbing in water between exposures is recommended for the best adhesive qualities.

Color Options

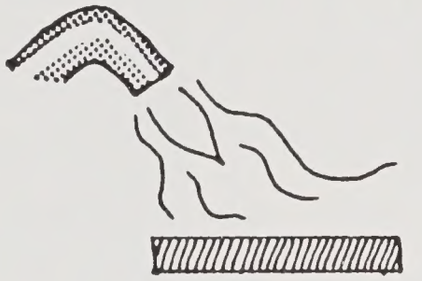
A wide range of surface colors are available from the more common agents:

- *Yellowish tone:* Remove metal from heat before patina turns green.
- *Brownish yellow on green:* Expose to a light flame. High areas of texture will turn brown.
- *Green with brown outlines:* Lay out pattern with water or a gel such as KY® or Lubafax.® A flame played over the surface turns exposed areas brownish with a brown outline.
- *Dark Brown:* Bleach painted on; 30-second exposure. If immersed, a mottled brown and green results.
- *Greener:* Add a few drops of acetic acid (vinegar)–do not add too much as it may ruin the solution.
- *Blue-green to blue:* Dip in a weak lye solution.
- *Bluish green to turquoise:* An easy variation, expose the work to ammonia fumes or paint it on. Heavily treated areas may lose adhesion. Apply to cool metal. The color reverts to green upon reheating.
- *Black:* This is a repeated application burnt black each time, reported by Anne Graham.
- *White (very pale green):* Vinegar painted on; approximately 60 seconds working time.
- *White:* 1:2 nitric acid solution (fumes!). If left on it removes the patina down to the metal surface.
- *Bright metal:* May be obtained by scraping through the patina layer (dust hazard; wear a good dust mask). Paint, inks or gold leaf may be laid in the incised areas or lines.

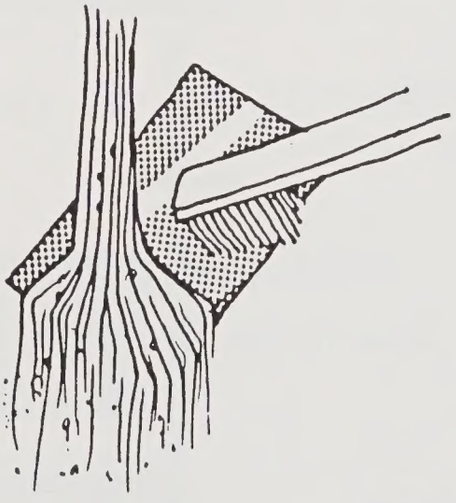
Cupric nitrate patina application



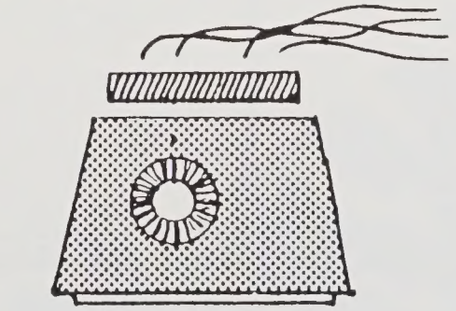
Heat and apply



Heat to black



Scrub well



Repeat to green

Protective Coatings

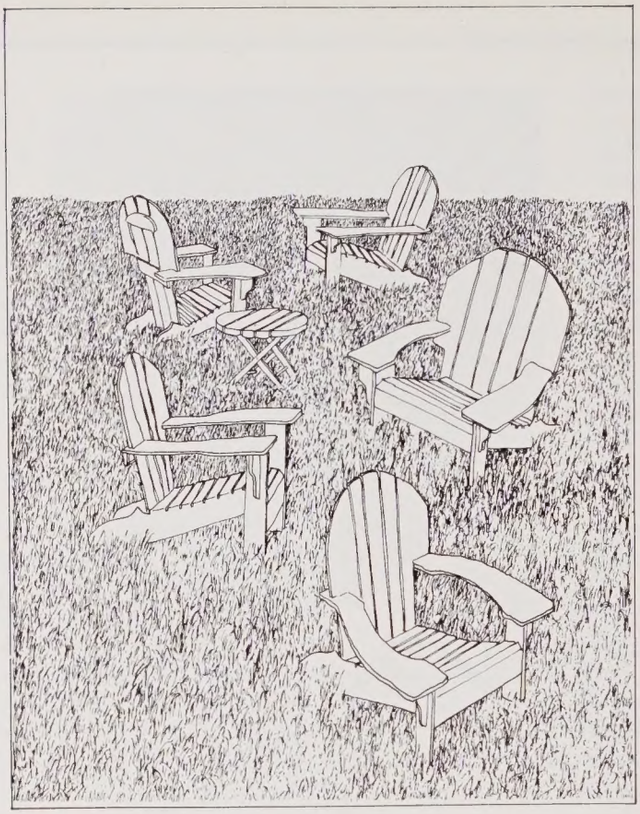
Correctly applied, the patina is tough and not liable to damage easily. Sealers are necessary for jewelry use. These would include waxes, thick oils, acrylics, lacquers, etc. Acrylic resins and resins like Envirotex® are good for over-all thick coverings. Samples should be made as a palette to choose from. Oils and waxes tend to darken the color, acrylics to make it resemble green paint. I usually spray the latter from a distance for a subtle effect and matt the surface with a cloth before it dries. Tapes, string, leaves, etc. may be used as masks to obtain patterned or mottled areas.

It is worth noting that a number of metal coloring procedures and patinas build up a layer of material over the surface, effectively hiding it. The only difference between them and the use of suitable paints is recent historical context. There is no reason, save tradition, why paint, sealed colored pencil, plastic resins and other durable surface coverings should not be used. Where esthetic choice demands and a durable medium is available, that medium should be used if appropriate to the intent of the work. Paint, for example, is faster to apply than many patinas and presents far fewer safety problems. Let the demands of the piece decide surface coverings and not tradition. And if you choose to use patinas care and enjoy the process.

Notes

1. Further information may be obtained from the full paper published in the Australian journal *Lemel* in three parts in 1987 or the paper can be ordered from Charles Lewton-Brain, 120 9th St., N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1S9, Canada. For specific colors, patinas and subtle surface effects, refer to *The Colouring, Bronzing and Patination of Metals* by Richard Hughes and Michael Rose, London: Crafts Council, 1982. This book also includes an exhaustive bibliography of sources dealing with metal coloring and patination.
2. *Chemische Farbungen von Kupfer und Kupferlegierungen*, Kupfer Institut, Berlin, 1974, p. 36.
3. *The Colouring, Bronzing and Patination of Metals*, op. cit., p. 41.
4. Ibid; p. 194.
5. Information on ventilation systems compiled by Jansen and Evans for the 1983 "Good as Gold" conference. Contact: The Ontario Crafts Council, 346 Dundas St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1G5, Canada.

Charles Lewton-Brain is a jeweler currently teaching at the Alberta College of Art.



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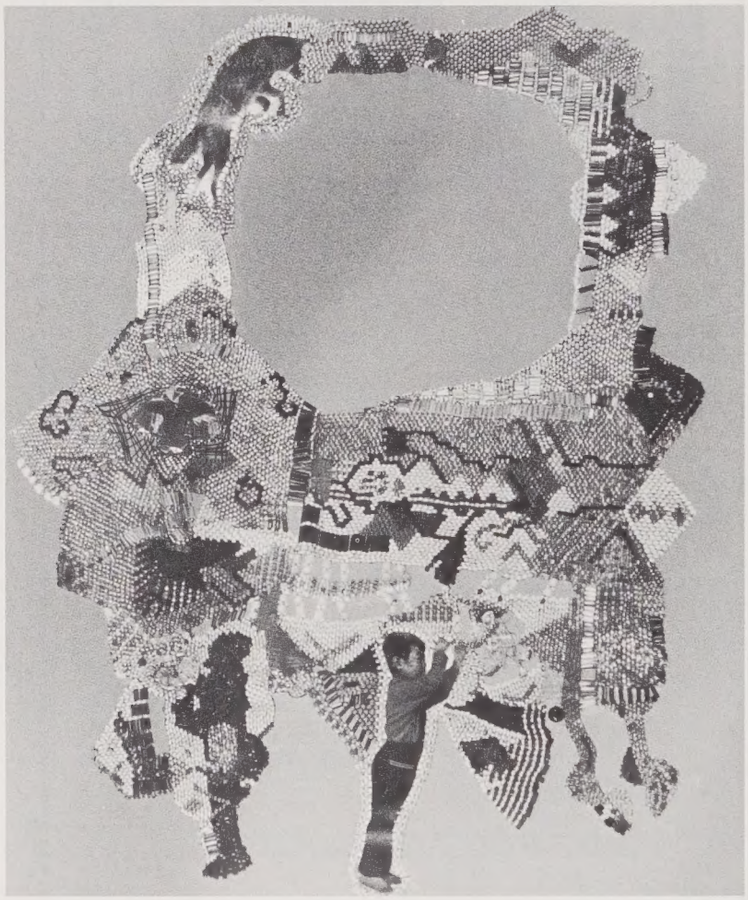
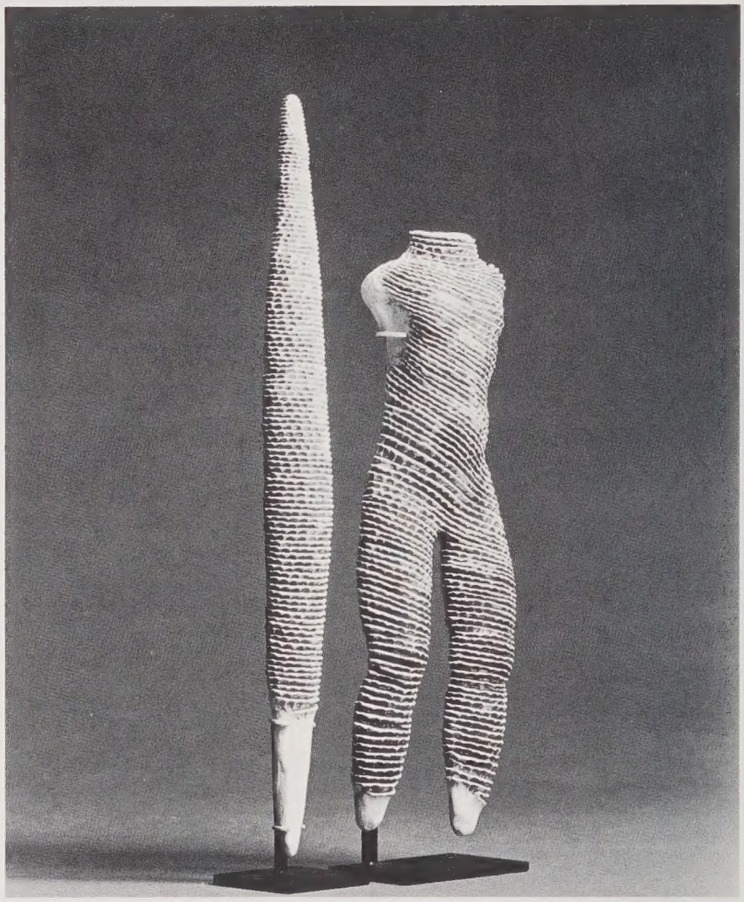




The Eloquent Object
Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK
September 20, 1987—January 3, 1988
by Susan Hamlet

"The Eloquent Object" is a show of substance assertion and great ambition. Premiering at the Philbrook Museum of Art and curated by Marcia and Tom Manhart, this exhibition presents more than 200 objects by 139 artists in wood, paper, metal, leather, fiber, clay and glass. Intended as an overview of work ranging from post World War II to the present, the show demonstrates how works of art in craft media have become eloquent voices for contemporary artistic expression. An additional objective is to prompt inquiry into the nature of craft, the nature of art and the relationship between the two. The book/catalog published in conjunction with the exhibition provides an outstanding compendium of images together with 11 essays. It serves as a guide, if not an essential companion, for viewing this show.

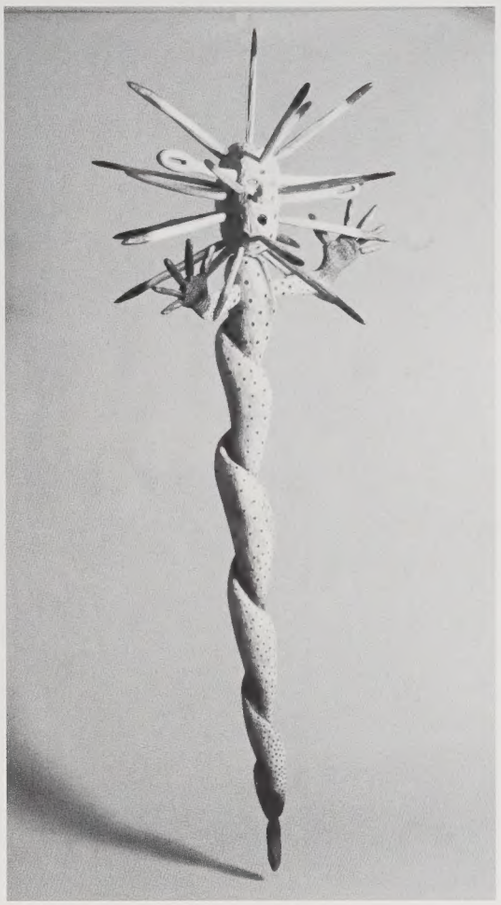
To the casual viewer, this exhibition may come across as just another crafts "blockbuster," and from this standpoint the selected work certainly provides satisfaction. Strong attempts, however, have been made to address matters of greater depth. One cannot avoid making comparisons with last year's American Craft Museum's keynote exhibition, "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical." The difference between these two shows is that the "The Eloquent Object" is considerably more ambitious and clearly academic in nature. For the informed viewer, this is a dense and rather difficult exhibition requiring multiple viewings and the assistance of the book/catalog to elaborate upon the curators' perspective.

The exhibition is organized into six areas of consideration: 1. The Ascendency of Ideas 2. The Rejection of Function 3. Illusion 4. Ritual 5. Social and Political Statement 6. Cross Cultural Influences. Upon entering the show one is greeted by a series of video interviews with artists and critics. Their remarks and insights are a splendid introduction for what follows. Thereafter, there is an attempt to create a sense of historical perspective for the work via a chronology of events over the last 50 years. This effort to sketch a timeframe for the exhibition is quickly lost by the presence of contemporary work. Through the device of a darkened labyrinth of viewing spaces, one is able to concentrate upon a select number of pieces exemplifying the show's six-part statement. In most cases, the featured work sits comfortably within such assignation. The delicate, partitioned Ruth Duckworth vessel works well in combination with John Mason's robust *Desert Cross* to epitomize the rejection of function. "Illusion" is represented through prime examples of trompe l'oeil by Wendell Castle and Marilyn Levine. To illustrate "Ritual," William Wyman's *Temple 27* glows mysteriously. Robert Arneson's *Holy War Head* speaks forcibly with political pugnacity. For "The Ascendency of Ideas," however, the work selected does not clearly represent the message of "ideas ruling material." Mary Lee Hu's *Bracelet #37* is a piece that primarily celebrates the lushness of fine materials rather than addressing the dawning of conceptual concerns. Perhaps seminal work from the 40s to 60s would better illustrate this category. On the other hand, "Cross Cultural Influences" offer particularly strong examples of artwork from the Eskimo, Latino and Afro American experience. Larry Fuente's *Oasis* achieves great heights in decorative obsession with his encrusted commode throne. Alison Saar's *La Rosa Negra* is a quiet sacred portrait, rich with reference. These pieces and others from artists of ethnic heritage are a refreshing complement and an important inclusion to the standard fine craft fare.

While the first segment of this show provides the conditions for gentle contemplation and the absorption of message, the second portion is truly overwhelming. Barring the idiosyncrasies of this particular installation, part two strikes with a sudden quantity and variety of work. The cohesion of the six-fold statement begins to break apart as one moves from an articulate linear presentation to a broad, densely packed viewing area. Here, historical pieces begin to appear, much of them metalwork. One sees and enjoys the work of Sam Kramer, Margaret De Patta, Alexander Calder and Art Smith. The continuum proceeds through the 70s with John Paul Miller, Stanley Lechtzin, Richard Mawdsley and Bill Harper, to name a few. While it is a pleasure to view classic jewelry/metalwork, there is a noticeable dearth of statement by recent generations in this medium. Worthy of special mention, however, is the work of Joyce Scott. Her beaded talismanic neckpiece is vivid, playful, dreamlike. Also, *The Double Cross* is part of a powerful quartet of beaded objects commemorating the Guyana Jonestown Massacre. She is one who can delight and disturb.

As the show continues to unfold, it becomes evident that this is no ordinary crafts exhibition. One first suspects that something is different with the introduction of Native American pottery. Later, we see work normally ascribed to the realm of fine art through the sculpture of Martin Puryear, Jackie Winsor, James Surls, Deborah Butterfield, Judy Chicago and others. The initial effect of seeing the combination of works commonly classified outside of contemporary crafts is quite jarring. One struggles to maintain a sense of affiliation or definition by media and field. When those defenses start to dissolve, one is left with unanswered questions such as: How should one look at Roy Lichtenstein's ceramic cups and saucers in relation to the cups of Ron Nagle? Why is the traditional blackware of Maria

Opposite, far left: Joyce Scott, *Bird Trapped in Shadows*, beadwork, 12 x 12 x ½", 1981; **left:** Michele Oka Doner, *Figure with Staff*, clay, figure—17"h. Photo: D. Jame Dee; **below:** Sherry Markovitz, *Autumn Buck*, papier mache, oil paint, beads, 36 x 15 x 21". Collection: Bill & Jan Bascom. Photo: Eduardo Calderon; **right:** James Surls, *Needle Man*, pine, oak, 118"h., 1980. Collection: Martin Sklar; **far right:** Bob Natalini, *Untitled 1987*, electronics, wood, paint, tile, Marlite gravel, cement, glass, doll's eye, iridescent beetle parts, found objects, photos, 36 x 24 x 15"



Martinez adjacent to a Dale Chihuly? Does Jackie Winsor's rope *Double Circle* share ground with the bound and stretched silk forms of Françoise Grossen? What similarities and differences exist between art within craft and the fine arts?

In many ways, this show makes clear that it is the material itself, manner of treatment, and formal concerns that can provide strong common denominators for artistic expression. For example, the sleek circular form and refined wood surface of Martin Puryear's sculpture *Simple Gift* is akin to Sam Maloof's handling of a settee. There exists for both an attitude embracing clean design and craftsmanship. Another instance of shared sensibility can be seen in Sherry Markovitz's *Autumn Buck* and Joyce Scott's work. Here, the rich qualities of beadwork, whether on the taxidermist's form or in neckpiece format, project an equal tenor of voice. The medium of clay has surely hastened the breakdown of barriers between the two fields. Charles Simmonds, Stephen DeStaebler and Michele Oka Doner are comfortable in either realm and have contributed to the fusing of the fields.

Another measure of comparison between crafts and fine art is that of content. Since this exhibition is intended as an overview, there exists a great range in the expressive content of work. If one were to look at extreme examples, however, certain distinctions do appear. Ken Little's sculpture *Red Bird*, an assemblage of shoes in the form of a leaping deer, is in essence conceptually grounded. Its concern is not with shoes, but with the power of image. Material is largely subservient to statement. On the other hand, an Otto and Gertrud Natzler bowl speaks in quintessential terms about clay, glaze and traditional form. Statement is to a great extent in service to material. Both pieces address content and concept in varying degrees, yet from the basis of different identities. They cannot be viewed as speaking from the same source, nor were they made with the same intent.

What about context? Are certain works of art destined to be separated by context? Clearly, the answer is yes. In this exhibition, Lucas Samaras's *Book* suffers from being taken out of the fine art context. Its cheerful, childlike appearance masks a subversive content, requiring the reference of a different kind of show. *Book* is an uneasy neighbor to Jack Earl's earthy, humorous and openly erotic "*I Met Marsha in a Bowling Alley . . .*" and surely strains this show's notion of "eloquent" object.

If the boundaries between fine art and art in craft indeed are blurring, then "The Eloquent Object" exhibition is the first to make manifest this claim. In drawing together work from across the borders of art conventions under the rubric of "objects," this show poses the challenge of definition. While this show does not and cannot provide answers at this time, the curators have succeeded in fulfilling their objective—"to prompt inquiry."

This exhibit will be traveling through 1989 to Oakland, CA, Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, Orlando, FL and Richmond, VA. A review of the book/catalog that accompanies the exhibit appears elsewhere in this issue.

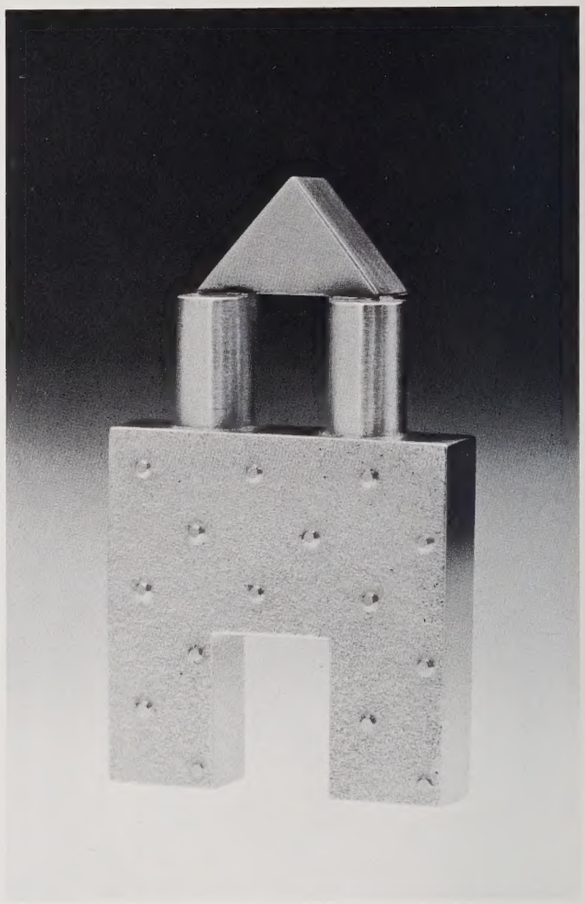
Bob Natalini and Rachelle Thiewes

Fine Arts Gallery, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
November 2—24, 1987
by Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser

Bob Natalini's shrinelike constructions and boxes recall the words of John Donne who found in "one little room, an everywhere." The small universes, displayed recently in the gallery of the Art Department at Texas Tech University, contained an assemblage of objects described to me by the artist as "all of the things I love," combined with kinetic action, flashing lights and electronic sounds. Programmed to heighten the mystery and resonance of each piece, the sound and lights were triggered by the movement of observers; even shadows activated the sensors. Natalini's early auditory ventures and experiments with animation were first introduced in his jewelry designs/sculptures, which the artist regarded as "little worlds which had windows with things inside like tropical beetles from Brazil" or lights that winked constantly until the batteries inside needed to be replaced. Natalini observed, "At some point, my work jumped to a larger scale that enabled me to have more freedom to expand and to do more complex functions with electronics."

In *Untitled 1987*, the viewer is the activator of a motion detector that releases a musical sequence composed of "manipulated acoustical and natural sounds," including the calls of desert birds, a chorus of voices, water sounds, resonant air sounds and bells. Fusing technology and art, the visual aspect of *Untitled 1987* focuses on two balls, like meteorites of planets, which project from a peach tile background; they enter space with a reminder of Magritte's famous engine roaring from a mantlepiece. The lower ball, embedded with fragments of glass, has at its center a circle of LED lights, which blink in patterns around a doll's eye (the lid painted "monster green") that slowly opens and closes as it revolves. The upper sphere is covered with aggregate and colored pebbles. Master of miniaturization, Natalini has opened a small window on the surface. Through this screened opening, a rotating carousel displays a sequence of 30 tiny objects, among these there are a mouse tooth, an infinitesimal baby sea horse, bits of scrimshaw, patches of astroturf, watch parts and

Below: Bob Natalini, *Untitled,* mixed materials and electronics, 18 x 19 x 15". Photo: Bob Hanson; **right:** Rachelle Thiewes, *Wire Pin,* silver, 18k gold, carved slate, heat and chemical color, 8½"l, 1986; **far right:** Lynda LaRoche, *Architectural Facade,* sterling silver, 14k gold, copper, 2 x 1¾ x ¼". Photo: Sidney Sander; **opposite, top right:** Lynda LaRoche, *Green Facade w/Stairs,* sterling silver, 14k gold, green marble, 1987; **below:** Lynda LaRoche, *Fragments w/Black Diagonal,* sterling silver, 14k gold, black slate, 1987. Photos: Sidney Sander; **far right:** Carrie Adell, *Sticks & Stones,* touchstone on fibula, 14k and 18k gold, shakudo, sterling silver, stainelss steel, 2 x 2½ x ½", 1987. Photo: S. Deveaux



a microscopic photograph of the artist with a beetle's head. For Natalini, a beetle seems to hold a peacock's plumage in the iridescent microchip reduction. With a finely tuned attenna, he reaches out into the world of nature as well as the world of manmade debris and discards. From these sources, Natalini fastidiously selects fragments and textures—wood covered with cracked and crazed paint or the elegance of rust and layered metals corroding into chasms and craters.

It is from such neglected memorabilia that *Untitled 1980* is assembled. The exterior is covered with pearl buttons; on either side there are three crucifixes in glass tubes that glow when the electrical current is turned on. The artist hastens to make clear that his work should not be characterized as a religious expression. It is a blend of the sacred and profane; both to Natalini are equally wonderful. He is also influenced by the symbols and mandalas of Tantric art. "I love things that have a kind of mysticism," he says. "I can't necessarily say why. I try to make things that are unusual, things that will thrill me." Enclosed in the "button shrine," there are pieces of Chinese paper, threads, weathered wood, the metallic glint of a silver chain and a bicycle reflector. These unlock the viewer's sense of the uncanny and the surreal, releasing the imagination to find its own figurative associations. A sudden jolt may occur with the discovery of a child's plastic ray gun behind the fabrications. The back of the box is no less remarkable than the aspects of inside/outside. Here, the circuitry and color coding form intricate abstract patterns. The various functions and methods for mastering the controls are indicated by directions lettered on attached cut-out profiles of human heads, a message that the mind is in control. The sound produced is an ethereal melody interrupted by strange noises; it may be on for four minutes and then off for a period that varies from four to 50 minutes.

Natalini brings together disparate sounds and objects using an intuition that seems to have its origins in the roots of the human race; at the same time, he reaches out to encompass the newest frontiers of science and technology. He involves people in his art; it is their actions that animate the sound and light systems. Developed to increase the sensory excitement and enliven the humble materials, these systems form multilayered symbolic puzzles. In the artist's words, the aim is "to create things that are unusual in a world of boring things."

Organized by Leslie Leupp, Professor of Art at Texas Tech University, the exhibition of Bob Natalini's sculptures was synchronized with a small exhibit of Rachelle Thiewe's metalwork, as well as pieces from her personal collection. The jewelry, made by well-known artists and craftspersons such as Helen Shirk, Bruce Metcalf, Ester Knobel, Leslie Leupp and others from Europe and the United States, conveyed a catholic taste, a sense of humor, an admiration for the extraordinary, as well as respect for traditional materials and methods and an equal interest in unconventional media and concepts of jewelry as body sculpture.

Links between the work by Thiewes and Natalini were present in the auditory and kinetic experiments that each explores. The pins and bracelets by Thiewes are set in motion by the movements of the wearer; parts slide together or tap each other producing tonal nuances from gatherings of silver quills touched by slate disks. Movement is implied in a piece like the *Wire Pin.* Even at rest, it appears poised for action like a finely balanced javelin. In Thiewes's metalwork, there seems an inherent threat of danger. Her needle points and slender ovoid shields suggest the wizardry necessary to transform a Zulu's spear into a scalpel.

Lynda LaRoche: Fragments and Facades

Artifacts, Indianapolis, IN
November 13-30, 1987
by Steve Mannheimer

To say that Lynda LaRoche's jewelry is about architecture is simply to locate her point of departure. Her destination remains open and her methods, the conceptual itinerary as it were, remains, elusive, even problematic.

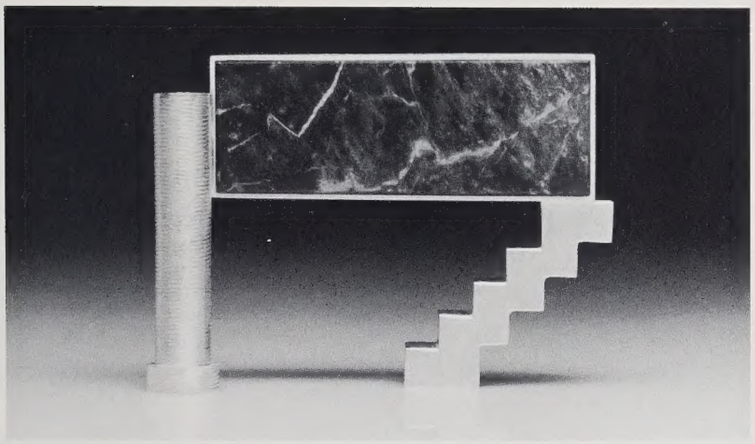
When the largest art form is translated into the smallest, the transformation is flavored by a hint of transubstantiation. LaRoche wisely refrains from merely miniaturizing buildings into these 10 brooches. Rather, she purifies, elaborates, disassembles and reassembles, ultimately disguising her monuments.

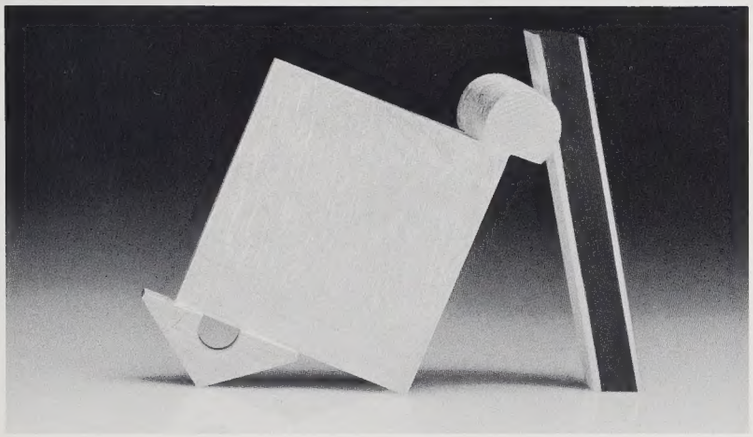
They may be abstract, as in *Fragment with Black Diagonal,* a geometric tumble with a triangular "roof" element at the bottom. Or they may be pictorial as in *Caribbean Fragment in a Landscape,* a horizontal, black and slate rectangle set with a smaller, gold and silver rectangle capped by a sawtooth "roof."

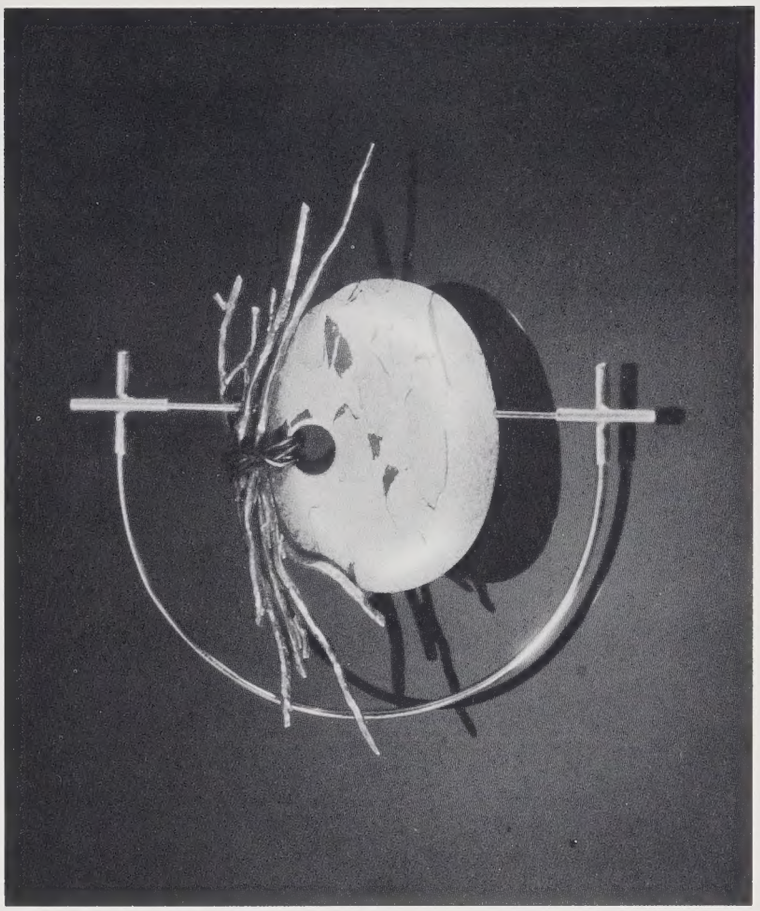
The other eight "fragments" and "facades" in the exhibition fall between these extremes, retaining a semblance of representation. LaRoche provides a vertical reference by locating the pins across the tops of the pieces. She reinforces the orientation by showing us the "ground plane" beneath her edifices, tiny slabs of slate or green and pink marble. Upon this rock she builds her art.

According to LaRoche's written gallery statement, she has taken her cues from post modernist architecture and "New Wave" Italian design. LaRoche should find ample inspiration in such visual lushness and invention. Yet, the forms she manufactures are so minimal and geometric, attuned more to the purist spirit of Modernism.

This paradox is greater than a mere semantic







tussle. LaRoche's immaculate workmanship may be the jeweler's art, but as building craft it is possible only in an architect's dream—the "zero-detail" look of materials joined perfectly. (And what materials! Not steel, nor even stainless steel, but silver.) In effect, these are ethereal, otherworldly visions reminiscent of Miles van der Rohe's conceptual collages—a window floating here, a floor there, Cartesian romances untroubled by structural necessities.

Or, we may consider these brooches as buildings glimpsed through the wrong end of a telescope: grime and soot squeezed out, chipped cornices smoothed while they shrunk, all made precious in compression. The rich materials of jewelry become that preciousness (in both senses of "become": to transform into and to appropriately adorn).

As lofty as they may sound, the works have a tendency to remind us of handheld artifacts. *Facade with Golden Triangle* could sneak by us as a Deco revival cigarette lighter, albeit an elegant one. Elsewhere, as in *Square Facade with Molding*, the sense of scale hovers above three landings: the immediate sense of the physical object, the illusion of a single window and ledge and the illusion of a huge, ceremonial arch.

We are left hanging, clutching to a brittle edge of an esthetic, a distillate of ornament. Perhaps the perch is too small to support jewelry's traditional mood of celebration or theater. Yet, at its best, it offers a thin, chiselled pleasure, like a face so perfect in its plainness that it silences the talk of beauty.

Carrie Adell: On the Rocks

Elaine Potter Gallery, San Francisco, CA
November 17—December 31, 1987
by Roberta Floden

Fascinated by organic shapes and natural forces, Carrie Adell has built her reputation on engaging, often flashy and frequently award-winning jewelry inspired by braided garlic bulbs, beehive hexagons, tetrahedrons, ball and sockets, kitchen sink grids and solar winds. By comparison, the pieces she has on exhibit at the Elaine Potter Gallery are subdued and traditional. Called "touchstones," they are indeed a continuation of Adell's tribute to the earth's geology. In genre, however, they are reminiscent of ornamentation it its most elementary if not original form—the perforated stone bead.

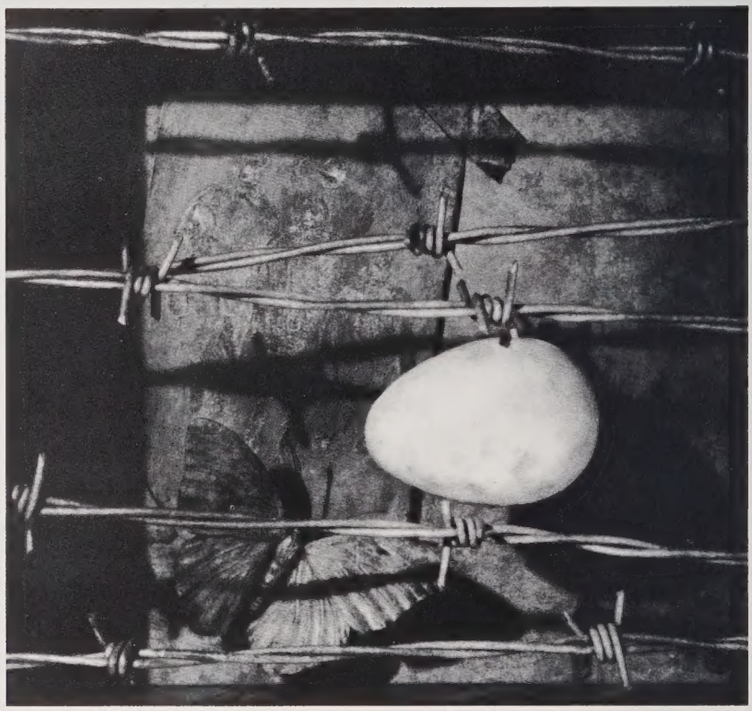
But one should not be put off by her humility and reverence. From this minimalist archetypal shape, Adell has developed interpretations as varied as those brought forth from the geological processes themselves. Constructed from sheets of metal (shakudo, silver, copper or gold) that have been overlaid and collaged with contrasting metal patterns and patinas, her touchstones offer provocative textures, articulations, grains in low and high relief and precious and semiprecious stones.

Adell's skill at painterly abstraction (her original training was in the fine arts), her obedience to process and her superb craftsmanship are in evidence on both the fronts and backs of her pieces. Details are perfectly analyzed, and intrinsic qualities of the metals are exploited. Surfaces—contour, texture, tension, reflection—provide a rich play of light and dark. Sculptural yet functional, each touchstone is a fresh approach to a basic form.

As testimony to their name, touchstones are for touching. To tempt the wearer to interact with their tactile qualities, Adell has provided several supports upon which one can arrange and rearrange the touchstone by size, color or texture. Most of them can be worn, front or back, on fibulae or "multipins" (gold safety pinlike mountings) that can be used as earrings, as a brooch or suspended from a chain or collar. *Sticks and Stones* is an eyecatching variation of this theme, with a cluster of sterling sliver sticks tied vertically by shakudo wire to the patterned gold matrix of the touchstone. Another variation is the arrangement of from one to five tubed touchstones on a gold neckring.

Some of Adell's necklace designs cannot be altered. Looking every bit like pebbles and stones on the bottom of river beds, *Goldrocks and Pebbles* is made with five touchstones hanging in a subtle configuration from five strands of dyed-to-match seed pearls. *Inclusions #1* and *Inclusions #2*, her tours de force, employ large touchstones with gem-studded intrusions on collars of (10 to 12) seed pearl strands. All of these neckpieces have cleverly concealed closing devices, integrated into the distinctive touchstone design.

Although reductive, even simple in conception, Adell's touchstones have none of the staleness of convention. Indeed, the interactive quality of the pieces and their purity of form introduces a clarity, a conceptual rigor and an esthetic that harkens back to the development of human culture and the belief that the act of transforming an object imbues it with the magical properties of a charm or amulet. It is this talismanic quality that empowers Adell's touchstones. She has created not only a loving marriage of art and craft but a classic jewelry of great psychological integrity.



Left: Kazuma Oshita, *Duet,* brass, bronze, 41 ½ x 59 x 36½", 1986; **below:** *Barbed Wire Dream,* brass, 8 x 8½ x 3½", 1986; **opposite right, top:** Barbara Mail, *From Refugee to Rogue* pin, 14k white and yellow gold, 18k, 22k gold, tanzanite, diamond, rutilated quartz, golden sapphire, enamel on sterling silver, 3¾ x 1⅛ x ⅜"; **below:** Barbara Mail, *Eclipse* pin, 14k rose and yellow gold, 22k gold, moon shell fragment, sapphire, 1 x 2 ½". Photos: Rod McCormick; **far right:** Daniel Jocz, Bracelet: *Sticks #2,* silver, 14k, 18k, 24k gold, soldered construction. Photo: Casey McNamara

Kazuma Oshita: The Art of Metal Hammering

Alexander F. Milliken Inc., New York City
May 2-June 3, 1987
by Christina De Paul

As artists increasingly reject the definitions that have historically separated metalsmithing and sculpture, the two activities seem to be converging. A recent illustration of this amalgam was the solo exhibit of the works of Kazuma Oshita.

Kazuma's work shows breathtaking technical expertise. At first glance the casual observer, seeking out metal objects, may pass over the lush texture of a worn leather jacket, the intricate folds of a sheet of crinkled tissue paper, the rich marbling of a polished stone tabletop. It is only upon closer inspection that one realizes those deceptively detailed items have also been created, as Alexander Milliken puts it, from a "flat, cold, hard piece of metal," transformed into art by the hammer of a master.

The work of the Hiroshima-born Kazuma, who first came to the United States some 10 years ago, hovers somewhere between realism and surrealism. In *The Love or . . . or About Love,* for example, a tall four-legged stool serves as the pedestal for a single rose stem lying across its seat—all very ordinary except that the rose bud itself is in violent flames. In the brass and bronze *Nostalgia Table,* a quill, a single white glove and a set of scales resting on an ornate side table provide the nostalgia, while a single wine goblet stands irrevocably broken, its shards strewn beside it. In *Barbed Wire Dream,* one of Kauma's smaller pieces, an egg and a butterfly are suspended mysteriously between threatening, imprisoning wire strands.

It is not just content and texture that surprise in Kazuma's sculptures, however, there is color. Not only is he in command of the hammer, he is also a wizard of patina techniques. The leather jacket draped so casually across the table in *Amaryllis and Cat* begs to be touched, a result not only of the folds and individual stitches hammered with such deftness into the brass, but also of the coat's lustrous burnished brown. In *Letter to Send Her,* a personal narrative depicting two addressed envelopes, one crumpled and the other aflame beside it, the brass paper is of an incredible white. The central object in *Life—Rose* is blood red, from petals to leaves to broken stem.

All of these elements—Kazuma's skillfulness with patinas, his hammering mastery, his realist/surrealist bent—come together in the striking brass and bronze *Duet.* Both clarinet and violin are detailed down to the last key, the individual strings. The seats of the pair of high-backed Edwardian chairs give the impression of deep green velvet. But the "figure" holding the clarinet seizes the eye and holds it: a stunning black cape covers a disembodied entity in one chair; a detached right hand holds the clarinet; neither head nor trunk nor extremities explain this spectral figure. The violin lies mute upon the other chair, awaiting its part in the duet.

Kazuma's more whimsical side comes out in other pieces. In *Wind of November* an autumn gale from an unseen window blows across the table, bending candle flame, causing pictures tacked on the wall to flap wildly and disarranging the tablecloth. Perfectly formed pears tumble, while a crumpled baseball cap is undisturbed. *Tête-à-Tête* features a serving table that bears two teapots with spout "noses" facing each other confidentially, nearly touching. The *Cat on the Table* reclines regally, hind feet and tail draped over table's edge. The results of the cat's handiwork surround it: a serving bowl tipped, with apples and pears strewn across table and onto the floor, a wine glass shattered, a sprig of flowers in a vase surviving untouched. The eyes of the cat are so lifelike, they seem to be searching for new mischief.

The smaller works in the exhibit, all of them wall pieces in the manner of Joseph Cornell, extend this whimsy in their more surrealistic motifs. *Life Time* is a two-part composition in which a single taper burns from high to low. *Swimming Doll* portrays a mannekin prone on a plank that is balanced on an egg fulcrum. The doll seems to be swimming toward an open birdcage, just out of reach, while two dragonflies cling to a wall.

Alexander Milliken has noted that vision alone has little meaning without the ability to implement it. The sheer craftsmanship of Kazuma satisfies this requirement and successfully combines the arts of metalsmithing and sculpture in works that appeal and challenge.

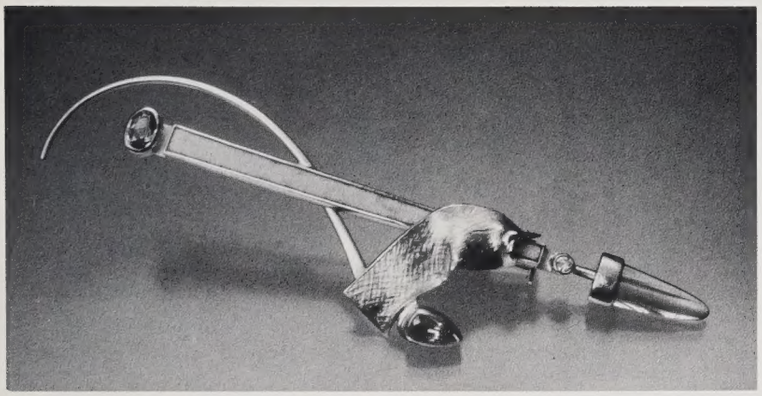
A 16-page illustrated catalog of the work in this exhibit is available from Alexander F. Milliken Inc., 98 Prince St., New York, NY 10012.

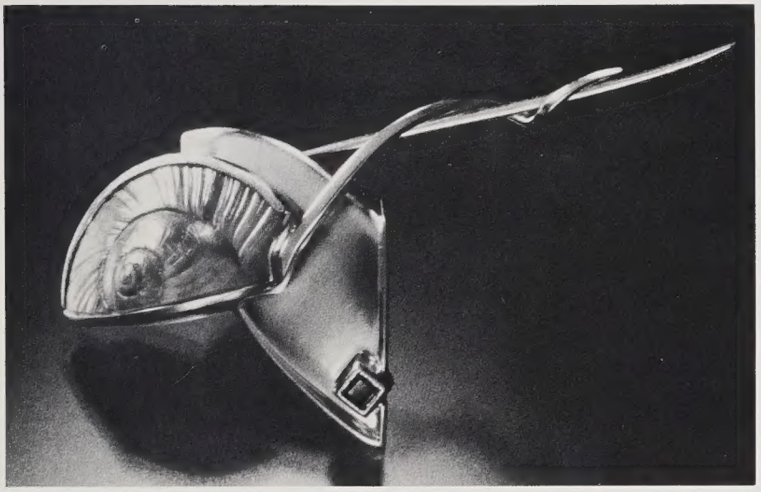
Barbara Mail: Jewelry

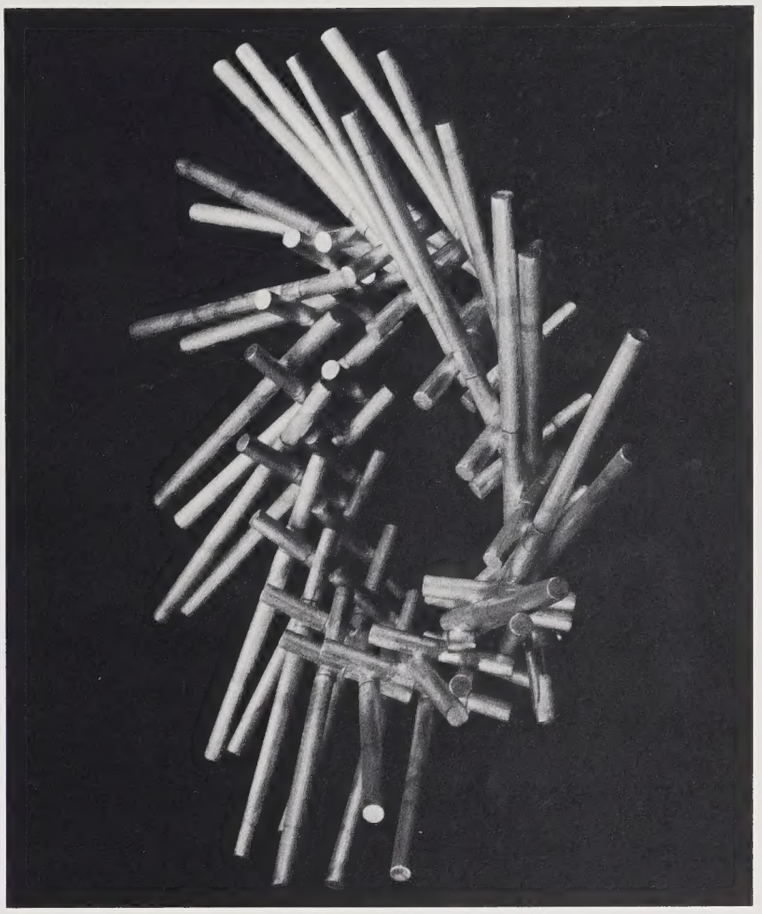
Swan Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
September 11—October 3, 1987
by Myra Mimlitsch Gray

There is no question that Barbara Mail is a veritable master of craft and design. Each piece in this exhibition was meticulous in execution and at the same time fluid and poetic, a graceful experience for the wearer.

Color is an obvious concern to Mail. The use of various gold alloys contributes to the richness of color and is essential for certain technical considerations. In *Eclipse,* 24k gold is necessary for a bezel that is pushed over a very fragile snail







shell in the pin, while the shear beauty of its color brings forth a coral glow from within the shell.

Mail's surfaces are the results of playful inquiry into wax. Sheets of wax have been pressed against various surfaces to acquire rich textures. These samples are then cast and later manipulated; some formed into sensuous tapering tubes, or spicula. Mail does not select these surfaces arbitrarily; in this group of work she has used wax impressions taken from ribbons that belonged to her grandmother.

Mail's jewelry abounds with personal iconography that has little relevance to the viewer. The pin *From Refugee to Rogue* is perhaps the most personal and also the most extraordinary piece in the show. It is an homage to the artist's grandfather. The linear motif of its design refers to his cigarette, with a diamond and rutilated quartz poised on the tip, reminiscent of the heat and evanescent smoke that is an ageless memory. An elegant arc of forged wire loosely traces his journey across Europe. A fragmented impression of her grandmother's ribbon is draped across these forms.

When one learns the stories that are the inspiration of Mail's work, each piece becomes more endearing. The grandfather pin becomes an icon, a medal, a charm, a locket, a journal. In fact, Mail's memories in words, thoughts, transcriptions are sketched in form by the materials' handling.

Many of the pins seem to be fabricated with a clear formal strategy. They are like the same score of music that has been notated each time with a slightly different hand. The most compelling and provocative works are those that show freedom from the rigors of design. *From Refugee to Rogue* seems to take the most risks. Here, Mail has invested equally in the exploration of form and design, as well as in her thoughts and memories.

In a statement about this work Mail wrote that her art is "an attempt to isolate a fleeting moment, examine it and turn it into a jewel to be contemplated, experienced, worn." Mail's work succeeds on many levels; it is foremost an elegant and unique contribution to the realm of fine jewelry, it is also a masterful survey of design and technique and it is a tender recollection of personal experience.

Daniel Clasby
Daniel Jocz

Elaine Potter Gallery, San Francisco, CA
May 26—June 27 (Clasby),
October 13—November 14, 1987 (Jocz)
by Joyce Clements

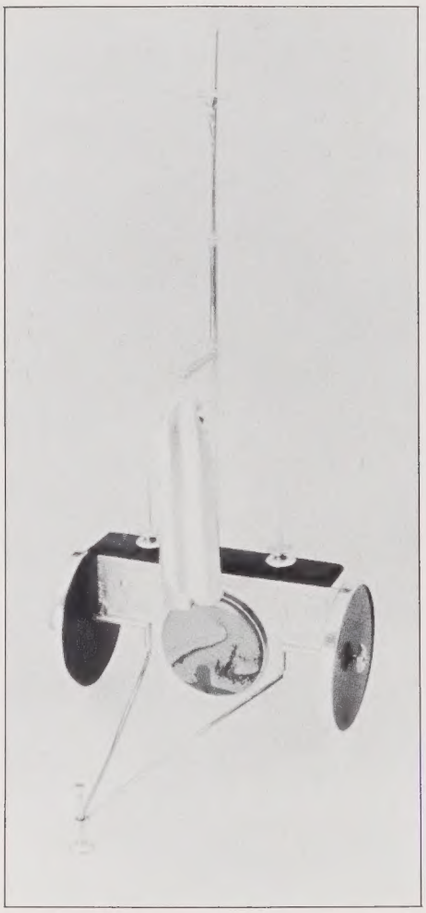
Contemporary metalsmithing could hardly be more trenchantly manifest—certainly not more ironically represented—than in the diminutive and largely metaphorical sculptures by Daniel Clasby and Daniel Jocz.

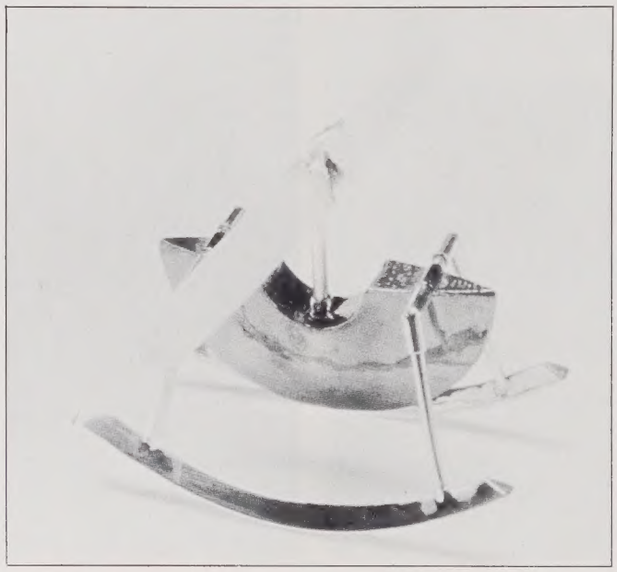
Clasby's show is his first in the United States. Originally from Montana, he now lives and works in New Zealand, where he has established and operates his own studio and "Associated Workshop." The latter is an atelier with 11 jewelry workstations. Clasby rents these spaces and does some teaching as well. His own work now is entirely sculptural—miniature (doll-house size) constructions in silver, various carats of gold, marble, gemstones, ivory and wood. Clasby's technique is eclectic—fabrication, interlacing, wood carving, casting—and while his technique is faultless, it stands entirely in the service of the idea.

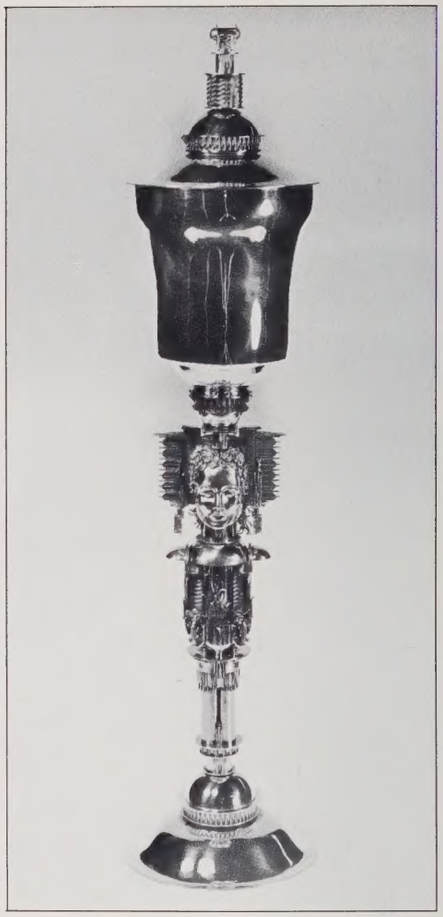
As reviewer Warwick Brown of *Art New Zealand* observes, the sculptures are well within the mainstream of Surrealism. The observer is treated to a suspension of reality, an alleviation of the ordinary and offered the challenge and feast of the artist's transmogrification. *She looked me over and I guess she thought I was alright, alright in a limited sort of way*, the title borrowed from a blues tune, finds itself expressed by a carved ebony arm and hand (scapula clad in fluid 22k furled cloth), clutching a silver crutch, the whole of which languidly rests atop a folding silver and gold table. Clasby is so clearly entranced by the verbal made visual that the sculptures and their titles are inseparable. It is easy to imagine the relish with which Clasby latches onto a verbal fragment or turn-of-phrase and enjoins it to his conceptual literations—emanations both personal and universal.

In God Only Knows What We Expected, Clasby presents a ceremonial apparatus—a chariot or trailer (after all, it has a hitch!) from the top of which, flanked by two candles of silver, rises a crucifix on a long standard. Midway up the standard protrudes a rod and towel circle, through which a vestment of loin cloth of 22k gold is draped, A gladiator's shield or disc of picture jasper is mounted to the front of the ebony wheeled vehicle. Other works, *Still Life*, (an ebony casket on a silver gurney), and *Learning to Live Without Art*, (carved boxwood hands and arms garroted in a padlocked stock, holding a silver tray on which are three skeleton keys) are disconcertingly, perhaps luridly fascinating. Others, for example, *Rock Therapy*, (a rocking horse-like contraption) and *Not for Sale* (the frame of a sail boat fully outfitted with working rudder, tiller, lines and oars) can be appreciated for their sheer whimsy. Irony in art is sometimes underwhelming; paradox can be presented in such an obvious way that once assimilated the "thrill" is gone. Not so with this art. Daniel Clasby's work is acute. His sculptures are invitingly and consistently confounding, a little devious and pointedly witty.

Daniel Jocz's work derives from Constructivist sculpture. Because of his apparent commitment







Left: Daniel Clasby, *God Only Knows What We Were Expecting*; **below:** Daniel Clasby, *Rock Therapy*; **right:** Richard Mawdsley, *Untitled Standing Cup*, sterling silver, fabricated, raised and repoussed, 17¼ x 4¼", 1986. Photo: Jack Hurley; **opposite left:** Richard Mawdsley, *Medusa* pendant, sterling silver, lapis lazuli, fabricated, repoussed head, 8½ x 3¾", 1979-80; **center:** *Headress* #6 pendant, 18k gold, moonstone, tantalum, titanium, fabricated, repoussed head, 7¼ x 4 x 1"; **right:** *Venus Fly Trap* pendant, sterling silver, black onyx, fabricated, cast, 6¾ x 3¼", 1977. Photos: Jack Hurley

to the vocabulary of hard-edged geometric shapes, Jocz's work has a feeling of clarity, strength and integrity. This type of structural presentation makes an explicit self statement, an intellectual rather than an emotional one. And yet, the combination of forms inevitably introduces a sense of enigma, suggesting a commentary of meaning other than that which is directly conveyed by the shapes. The kineticism Jocz introduces into his constructed forms adds a dimension of playfulness which is delightful. Wearability, in this instance, adds to intrigue. Taper, a geometric crescendo to be worn around the wrist, is a sterling silver and 18k, hinged, married metal piece, consisting of 18 rhomboid cubes that can be arranged into myriad combinations of folded forms.

No more than a block away from the Elaine Potter Gallery at an entrance to the Davies Symphony Hall stands a welded plate steel sculpture by Fletcher Benton, *Balanced, Unbalanced T*. The comparison between this massive geometric piece and Jocz's newest work, the *Jazz Geometrics* bracelets, is unimpeachable. It is as if the *T* succumbed to gravity, rearranging itself with flexible links, fluid despite its monumental scale, anchored despite its spatial freedom.

Jocz is an absolute master of mechanisms. *Leger demain* is a part of his work, allowing linkages to be fluid but not infinitely manipulable, constrained but free. Both in the necklace and bracelet *Sticks*, tubular forms of married sterling silver and various carats of gold are confederated into a thicket, whose movement, linkage and fastening are wondrous. The sticks lay orderly and elegantly in alignment when worn or placed in circular configuration, but the thicket can be made seemingly haphazard and impenetrable by a bit of jostling. The planning and craftsmanship demonstrated in these pieces tends to reinforce the artistic accomplishment of the work, for in no way do the mechanics interrupt the impact of the concept's realization, and, in fact, conceptually and spatially enhance it.

Richard Mawdsley: Master Metalsmith

National Ornamental Metal Museum
Memphis, TN
August 16—October 25, 1987
by Linda Lindeen Raiteri

As Richard Mawdsley cleans the pieces for this one-person show, he examines each one, silently noting the level of craftsmanship, the degree of success in expressing his vision. Some of the work, made as gifts for friends or family, has never been exhibited. Some he has not seen in 10 years. He wants to place these pieces that represent artistic breakthroughs side by side to see where he has been, where he is going and what he would like to take with him.

"Intricate, delicate, protracted, heavily involved" are the words Richard Mawdsley uses to describe his work. For 25 years he has worked with one type of material: tubing, and he seldom creates more than one or two major pieces a year.

The centerpiece of the exhibit, a 17" high sterling silver drinking vessel *Untitled Standing Cup* is drawn from vessel forms prominent during the Renaissance and Mannerist periods. He places it so that it is both the first work seen and the last. The geometric borders reflect the formal design of his early career. The expressiveness of the face and the realism of the woman's hair demonstrate his recent challenges.

This masterpiece, finished in 1986, is both a culmination and a fulfillment. In contrast to much of the exhibit, *Untitled Standing Cup* conveys a restful quiet, a serenity. Each strand of hair on the woman's head shimmers with life.

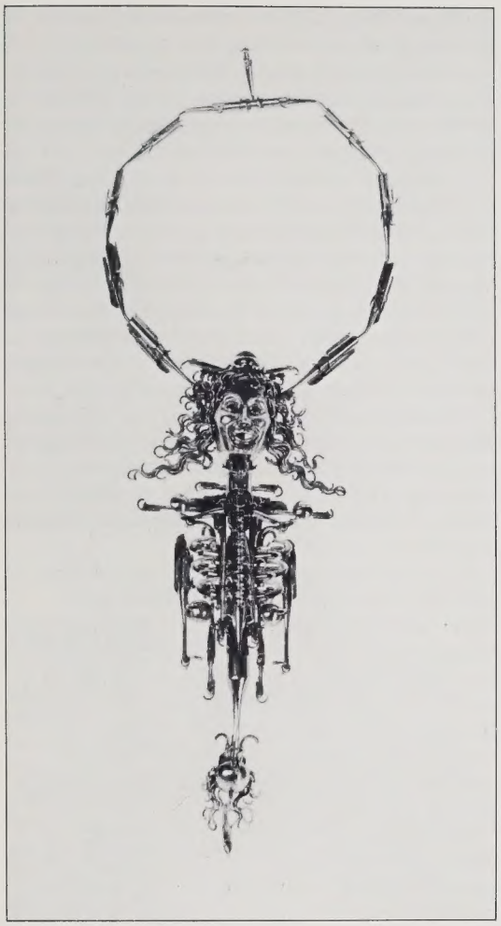
Mawdsley pulls his images from legend. His most forceful pieces depict that moment between the generation of elemental power and its unleashing.

The sterling and lapis lazuli *Medusa* pendant (1979—80) bares a barbed and heartless rib cage, a miniature torture chamber. Her undulating strands of hair are delicate, controlled.

This suspended animation is repeated in the unfurling of the 1986—87 pearl and sterling pin *Corsage*, where the lines approximate the weight and speed of mercury. In *Headdress #6* (1984—85), a pendant of 18k gold tubing, moonstone, tantalum and titanium, the snakelike hair surrounding the repouss face is rounded and elonégated more like tentacles.

Yet it is not the hair that contains the Samson-like power of these images. In these pieces Mawdsley conveys the strength of beings who are fully, menacingly present, ready to explode out of the stillness that holds them temporarily in abeyance. She-Ra, Princess of Power appears incarnate when a mere mortal dares to wear the 1977 *Venus Fly-Trap* pendant of sterling and black onyx. The nude torso of this fabricated and cast jewelry piece entices one into the thorny dangers of her barbs, while the well-known belt buckle *Goneril, Regan, Cordelia* (1976), made as a response to "the dilemma of the woman's movement and having nothing to do with Shakespeare," using the same female figure as *Venus Fly-Trap*, but in triplicate, implies protective magic for the wearer.

As Mawdsley matures in his work, the potent stillness of the early mechanical forms spills and softens, as in the face of the woman of the centerpiece of the exhibit, the *Untitled Standing Cup*.



Report:

Craft as Content

University of Akron, Akron, OH
October 31, 1987
by Donna Webb

This one-day symposium, organized and curated by metalsmith Christina De Paul, was the first of its kind to address the issue of craft and its meaning. An exhibition of works by Carol Kumata, Karl Bungerz, Gene and Hiroko Pijanowski, Lisa Norton, Whitney Boin, Donald Friedlich, Rebekah Laskin, Laura Marth, Kazuma Oshita, Helen Shirk and Rachelle Theiwes was held during October and November in the university gallery.

During the symposium's morning session five speakers presented a statement in definition of craft as content. Bruce Metcalf spoke for the possibility that careful craftsmanship can be part of the meaning of a work, as that found in the brushmarks of David Park or the splashes and drips of Jackson Pollack.

Hiroko Pijanowski spoke about the meaning of craft in Japanese art where specialization allows craftsmen to hone their skills. She also described the acquiring of skills as a discipline akin to meditation; strict discipline leads to selflessness, the goal of Zen meditation.

Karl Bungerz described his work as a model-maker for industry and how those standards and processes inform his work.

Carol Kumata told us that her work is at a juncture, moving away from reproducing her ideas through craft, to a way of working in which the act of building the piece and the revelation of the idea are coincidental. In these latter pieces she believes craft is much less of an issue.

Michael Dunas described the possibility of working solely to express craft. He isolated for us through allegory the pure ore of craft with no contamination from individual expression.

The afternoon session moderated by Sarah Bodine was open to questions and comments from the floor. The ensuing discussion owed its character partly to Christina DePaul's request that the symposium focus not on the issue of "art versus craft," but rather on "craft as content." This decision was important, for it forced us to examine not the enemy without (the world of fine art) but the enemy within—our inability as people involved in craft to clearly define the basic terms of our discipline.

No one definition of craft could be agreed upon by participants in the symposium. As Michael Dunas said, "I understand that we need to take a stand on craft but I don't know what it is I'm standing for." Janson's *History of Art*, probably the most commonly used introductory art history text for the last 20 years states: "Originality then, is what separates (the making of) art from craft." It is clear that most people engaged in craft reject this point of view. Several opinions were discussed at the symposium concerning the definition of craft. Some characterized craft as slow, careful making. The value and therefore the meaning of careful craft was hotly contested by the contingent from Cranbrook who raised the possibility that careful craftsmanship is a reactionary activity. A third point of view was that craft exists as a continuum where the more careful is on one end and the more spontaneous on the other.

Limiting craft to careful making falls into the trap set by Janson, which clearly separates art and the crafted object by focusing on care rather than on making of esthetic choices. If craft is a reactionary activity now, then standards of craft must change with time and express the values of the period.

A definition of content was more generally agreed upon as a broad range of meaning present in works. The only serious objection came from Mitchell Kahan, director of the Akron Art Museum. He contended that content should be described as existing in sculpture and painting where metaphorical and symbolic issues are explored, while something as yet unnamed was present in craft objects as a result of the process of making. Sarah Bodine pressed Kahan to call this unnamed quality content but he did not feel comfortable with that definition instead describing what he called a psychological meaning present in crafted objects.

We read craftsmanship in the same way we read other visual evidence. Knowledge of why an artist uses a technique, gesture, formal or symbolic element is valid information, useful in assessing intent and meaning in the work. I believe that visual information is the "speech" of making and as such has content.

What should come out of discussions such as these is a clearer idea about the meaning of craft (a manifesto is almost too much to ask for) which will allow a compelling case to be presented to the critics and art historians who seem to have such a formidable hold on our destinies.

American Jewelry: Glamour and Tradition
by Penny Proddow and Debra Healy
Rizzolli, NY, 1987, 208 pp., illustrated, $65.00 hc

This beautiful book discusses the history and development of American trade jewelry in precious metals. It focuses on those entrepreneurs who manufactured jewelry for the elite and wealthy classes, from the American Revolution of 1776 until the present day. The authors, Proddow, a jewelry historian for Christie's, and Healy, a jewelry designer, provide a clear and interesting chronology of these entrepreneurs and their proliferation, beginning with the establishment of Shreve, Crump & Low in the late 1700s, to Cartier, and Tiffany & Co.

The publishers have done their job rather well by producing a handsome book, nicely printed and bound, with abundant, beautiful illustrations. The quality and consistency of the photographs is excellent. However, the bibliography is limited and the index is sparse.

Proddow & Healy combine the documentation of the founding of the various companies with the political and social issues of the time. The authors provide interesting parallels between the design themes of each American era with the stylistic attitudes of Europe, which often originated in Paris. There are discussion of technological innovations, such as the advent of bottled oxygen leading to the creation in 1912 of the contemporary jeweler's torch. This lead the way to the realization of working with platinum, and all-platinum jewelry. There is a brief discussion of the technology of casting, but its significance and impact on the jewelry trade or on designs that were produced using that technology is not made clear.

The authors contribute little to enlightening the reader as to what is really American and new in the modern era. They say, "the mobility of America's democratic society has kept precious jewelry from remaining in the hands of a select few, and these changes in ownership have generated stylistic renewals . . ." The examples shown, however, are of pieces so heavily encrusted with jewels that only the most wealthy could possibly afford them. It is important to note that American jewelers have achieved success not only through business acumen, but also through design and technological innovations.

The problem with this text, for those of us who come from the academic rather than the trade tradition, arises when the authors address the post World War II era. Jewelry design bifurcated after the war. One branch was a continuation of activities the authors explain, and the other was the independent jeweler/designer/artist trained in American universities and art schools. As evidenced in their afterword, the authors wished to limit their focus of modern jewelry to that which followed the traditions of the early period. The leading modern jewelers they selected to illustrate the modern American jewelry period are Van Cleef & Arpels, Inc., Harry Winston, David Webb, Inc., Bulgari and Calvin French, Inc. It is true that these companies come out of the tradition of Tiffany & Co. In fact, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish these modern jewelry designs from their forerunners.

A distinctively American occurrence, after World War II, has had a dramatic influence on our jewelry. After the Second World War, many returning servicemen entered colleges and universities under the GI Bill. These men, from rural America, had experienced other cultures while in Europe and the Orient, which caused them to be impatient with traditional art curricula. They wanted more options than their predecessors. This lead to art schools around the country experiencing a sudden surge of interest in the crafts, including jewelry making. The creation, design and production of jewelry would no longer be tied to the European apprenticeship system. Traditional motifs and design sensibilities of the European court jewelers were challenged. University jewelry programs encouraged unique designs and research into ancient and contemporary technology. Jewelry was seen as an art form with esthetic concerns. Because this activity was so removed from the conventions of the jewelry industry, the authors probably chose to ignore it.

Had the title been less inclusive, this reviewer would not feel the need to call attention to the impact on jewelry design made by the numerous American artist/jewelers trained in college and university jewelry programs. After World War II, university-trained jewelers found their way into the industry and have greatly influenced it. This is evidenced by the proliferation of articles focusing on young college-trained designers featured in trade publications such as *Jewelers Circular/Keystone* and *American Jewelry Manufacturer*. Much of the recent innovative approaches in commercial jewelry owe their origins to the research activities of the teachers in art programs around the country. Perhaps the title "The History of American Trade Jewelry" would have been more appropriate.

The authors have succeeded in their stated objective; a very good chronology of the development of the jewelry industry. As yet, there is no comprehensive text that documents unique American jewelry originated by the university trained designer/craftsman post World War II. Nevertheless, one can gain some idea of this recent period from texts such as: *Jewelry Concepts and Technology* by Oppi Untracht; *Tradition and Change; The New American Craftsman* by Julie Hall; *Objects: USA* by Lee Nordness; *Twentieth-Century Jewelry* by Barbara Cartlidge; *The Eloquent Object: The Evolution of American Art in Craft Media Since 1945* edited by Marcia Manhart and Tom Manhart. I recommend Proddow and Healy's book to those who wish an overview of commercial American jewelry and to individuals involved with estate jewelry.
—Stanley Lechtzin, Area Head Metals and Jewelry Department, Temple University Tyler School of Art.

Art Aurea
Ebner Verlag GmbH & Co. KG
Postfach 3060, 7900 Ulm/Donau, W. Germany
quarterly subscription: 56DM

Art Aurea, edited by Reinhold Ludwig out of Ulm, West Germany, is a striking new quarterly journal devoted to jewelry and related arts. Prior to the appearance of *Art Aurea*, post-war Dutch, German, Swiss and Austrian designers had gone without a regular forum for their work, only the occasional coverage in trade publications such as *Aurum* (Switzerland) and *Gold & Silber* (Germany). Rather surprisingly, the reputations of Hermann Junger, Claus Bury, Reinhold Reiling, Peter Skubic, Otto Künzli, et. al., have gained international currency through a network of supportive artists and gallery owners, foreign magazines like British *Crafts* and *Metalsmith*, books by Ralph Turner and gallery or museum catalogs that have been the main source of documentation in the field. However noble these efforts, they have only circumscribed the need for a representative publication. In its third year, *Art Aurea* appears to be rectifying this situation by showcasing the work of contemporary Northern European designers on a regular basis.

Art Aurea is visually instructive, with seductive color, graphics, printing and design. The text in both German and English is perfunctory and descriptive, used mainly to amend the content of visuals. The subject matter is primarily jewelry with coverage extended to related sculpture and utilitarian objects by designers from the aforementioned countries. The editorial purview does extend to sympathetic work from England, the United States and Italy, and there is a noticeable penchant for ethnic jewelry and body adornment. Regular features include historical articles, reports and reviews, artist profiles and interviews, editorials—the full menu we have come to expect from any art magazine.

The potential significance of *Art Aurea*, however, lies beyond its apparent function as a showcase for contemporary European work, as valued as that may be in the current climate of journalistic neglect. Like other arts, the metals community is an international one. Only through an international dialogue can the metals community hope to develop a coherent body of knowledge, historical and critical, that embraces cultural and esthetic diversity.

Art Aurea is a major step in this direction. It fills the information gap from the European perspective, characterized by a bias for ethnic decoration and a notion of the avant-garde bound by cultural and historical threads. This perspective links jewelry to a contemporary amalgam of conceptual art, design and fashion.

Jewelers in Europe assume the mantle of designer more readily than in other parts of the world, developing the tradition of industrial materials and methods, structure and architecture, reductive form, minimalist expression and cerebral content that have come to be identified with the Bauhaus. It seems more than a coincidence that *Art Aurea* is published out of Ulm, whose Hochschule has become the spiritual heir to the Bauhaus.

There is also an affinity for conceptual jewelry, that is, jewelry about jewelry. After the devastation of WWII, the economic and social reconstruction of Europe has led to a corresponding cultural reconstruction, a period of questioning and investigation, an attempt to resurrect the values of history and tradition while at the same time evolving a construct for a new German identity that is self-critical yet recuperative. The work of these designers tends to be questioning the critical value of jewelry, its function in validating a class-bound society, its ultimate value as adornment, its commodity value, its liberation in an international expression of esthetic norms.

But more importantly, *Art Aurea* is about fashion, not in the sense of complementing current trends in clothing but the fashion of the runway, the semiotic manifestation of cultural identity, fashion, not of quotidian dress and usage but of the fashion photograph whose meaning and appreciation dissolves once the page is turned and only the idea remains. There is an abundance of codified images throughout the magazine, contrived setups of outrageous situations, confrontational and strident constructions about the body, often brutal and unnerving when wearability is considered. This is not art to wear but jewelry to be contemplated. The magazine strives to suggest new directions for fashion rather than jewelry to accompany fashion. It is

an attempt by designers to come to grips with the codes by which the culture presents itself through jewelry. In this light, the inclusion of primitive or ethnic jewelry in the pages of the magazine becomes more relevant. These cultural artifacts become important not as anthropological curiosities but as a cultural lesson how other societies are dealing with their struggle with identity. *Art Aurea* is a welcome addition to the growing body of documentation on modern jewelry. Its circulation both here and abroad facilitates a greater awareness and appreciation of international cross currents vital to a developing art form.
—Michael Dunas

All inquiries concerning *Art Aurea*, either editorial or subscription, can be directed to their U.S. representative: Joke van Ommen, 2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.

The Eloquent Object
Edited by Marcia Manhart and Tom Manhart. Essays by the Manharts, Rose Slivka, Horace Freeland Judson, Penelope Hunter-Stiebel, Johnathan Fairbanks, Mary Jane Jacob, John Perrault, Lucy Lippard, George Aguirre, Ronda Kasl, Edwin Wade. The Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK, 1987. Distributed by The University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 292 pp., 160 color and 142 black-and-white illustrations. $45.

In this year of the craft extravaganza, we've been told by the American Craft Museum that craft objects speak poetically and now we are informed by The Philbrook Museum of Art that they speak eloquently. If craft objects are talking so much, how come no one is listening?

The premise for this exhibition and the accompanying book is one that has been circulating around the crafts community for some time: craft objects are indistinguishable from fine art objects because they often share similar materials. Further, upon closer scrutiny, profound similarities as to context, intention and esthetic effect can be discovered and thus, as the Manharts indicate in their opening essay: "The old limits, old channels for expression having broken down, we need new descriptive categories and new standards: without them, in this world of flux, critical analysis—even simple conversation—is almost impossible." This choice of perspective is easily understood in light of the current phenomenon of "revisionist" art historians who are rocking the art world with their radical methodologies borrowed from structuralism, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, linguistics and anthropology and whose efforts to debunk the myths of formalist investigations into style and subject matter open the door to "overlooked" art forms like crafts, folk art and industrial art. Unfortunately, in their haste to join the bandwagon, the well-intentioned Manharts have failed to understand that contemporary crafts in a Western industrialized culture have persisted and grown in this century specifically because of the "alternative" values they embody. They neither derive from nor are benefitted by a "revisionist" approach to fine art history.

The visual documentation of the book deviates from the polemical "areas" of the exhibition (see Susan Hamlet's review of the exhibition in this issue). Instead, the work acts to illustrate the essays, reinforcing the didactic approach that distinguishes the book from the exhibition catalog. The craft objects chosen are by and large confined to artists identified with the 60s and early 70s—a period familiar to the Manharts and to Rose Slivka, primary consultant on the project. Interspersed among the crafts, fine artists using craft-based materials as well as primitive and ethnic artists are introduced to lend credibility to the premise of a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary history. While at first glance this broad perspective appears daring and provocative, the text fails the promise of an "open" dialogue with contemporary craft. The informative captions maintain a humble correspondence with the craft objects in spite of the fact that the essays go their own way in pursuit of their revisionist goals.

The volume opens with the Manharts' pleasant reminiscence of crafts in the 60s. Their catholic tastes and amiable disposition serves to introduce and evoke "these artists and their works in terms of their abundance, their joy, their life-enhancing exuberance." Rose Slivka follows with another reminiscence, this time focused on her tenure at *Craft Horizons*, a story well known but worth repeating. She restates the long-standing dilemma of William Morris that the "aspect of man is no longer the center of things and his eyes are only accessories of his own growing sense of displacement. In the face of all this, the survival of the handcraftsmaker—enemy of mechanical mindlessness and carrier of the weight of humanism with all its objects of art and utility that define a culture—testifies to the persistence of man's exuberant reverance for himself, of man the artist, the lover of life, its own best reason for being." The theme of art and culture resurfaces in other essays and Slivka justly posits its historical importance to crafts.

The next five essays disintegrate rapidly into the tiresome art-vs-craft debate. Horace Freeland Judson offers a weak paraphrasing of Gombrich's relativity of perception in which "he [the artist] obliges us to sustain and resolve perceptual and psychological dissonances of a special kind" as a basis for accepting all visual forms that break the frame of esthetic norms. Penelope Hunter-Stiebel takes the position that the polarity between high and low art (crafts obviously being the latter) will resolve itself in the near future. Although her reading of classical periods is informed, she offers no hard evidence for an imminent reversal of fortune. Johnathan Fairbanks starts off with pathetic plea for equality and rapidly moves on to extol the virtues of museums as protectors of objects of "time and taste," eloquent objects that are highly useful and often essential for those who are contemplative. You can skip this one.

Mary Jane Jacob's essay could be considered the keynote to this volume. In it she focuses exclusively on fine artists' use of craft media, making a convincing case for ignoring a discrete craft sensibility and the attendant phenomena of a subsistent craft community. Her concluding statement marks the thematic denouement of the text: "A prejudice against crafts endures, even while art has come closer to crafts through an active exchange of ideas. In our campaign to earn status of artist for those who have excelled in their use of craft materials, we have but to look at the changes in contemporary art to see that the former criteria for defining art and craft are no longer applicable and to acknowledge the indebtedness of today's art to the ideas of craft." Jacob's position is that art has changed as a result of its exposure to craft forms and particularly in its recognition and use of craft-based material. Craft is not seen to follow its own evolutionary course but to act as a stimulus for change in the art world through its assimilation.

John Perrault's witty and often caustic strategy to reverse the roles of art criticism, attacking fine art with the same criteria that are usually applied to craft makes for amusing reading but in the end it only serves to galvanize the either/or debate. Perrault has often written intelligently and respectfully of ceramics in the past but insights such as "experience of craft art that retains and celebrates utilitarian forms requires the ability to perceive, receive and process more than one constellation of sense data at a time" seem to get lost in overbearing rhetoric. It is a shame that cognoscenti like Perrault, Jacob and Hunter-Stiebel were commissioned to address the banal topic of art vs craft rather than applying their considerable skills to the craftwork at hand. Rather than being illuminating, they are burdened by overworked themes and ultimately entrapped by the hardened inequities and political infighting of the art world.

The final four essays distance themselves from the rest not only in their avoidance of the art-vs-craft debate but also in their moral independence. Lucy Lippard's challenge to destroy ethnocentricity in favor of a true cultural democracy permits craft to be respected for itself as an expression of its constituency. "The lack of understanding of art's function is at the core of the false dichotomies between art's forms and art for difference audiences." George Aguirre continues the elaboration of cultural pluralism in his anthropoligcal schema: "As the artist goes to the heart so the culture must go to the artist, who is the heart of the culture," while Ronda Kasl and Edwin Wade speak to the ritual and spiritual object that nourishes a community.

Although the notion of an art/cultural paradigm is as valid for crafts as it is for all artifacts of a manmade society, its application in this case appears to compromise the "disenfranchised" integrity of contemporary craftsmen. The danger is evident and obvious: you cannot amalgamate all contemporary crafts into an "art" movement, returning to values of primitivism, spirituality, ritual, folk and ethnic art. Too often essays in this section look backward to primitive archetypes or current ethnic art to justify the craft community. Rarely do they look to the amorphous network of "countercultures" that support contemporary craft, in rural, urban or academic environs.

The overall failing of *The Eloquent Object* (to paraphrase Lippard) is its insistence on dragging these things into museums or fashionable art theories and sacrificing them to the avant garde. Instead, the essayists should have respected crafts for what they already are in their own contexts with their own vernacular. Cultural authenticity is at the heart of all good art. So long as the dignify offered objects is denied to the people who made or inspired them, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary consciousness will be an uphill battle. The curators of this exhibition and their apologists have obviously looked to crafts with adoring and all-consuming eyes but they are still not listening to what they say.
—Michael Dunas

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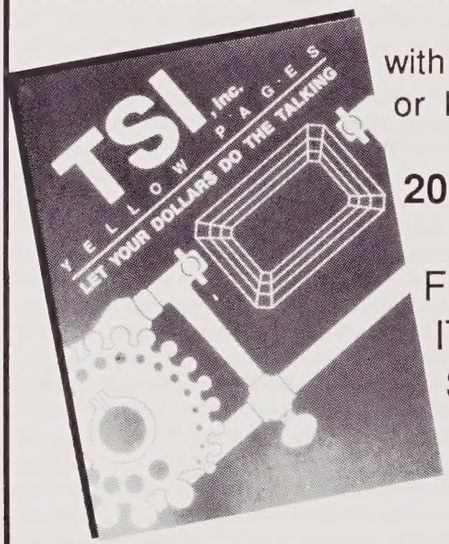

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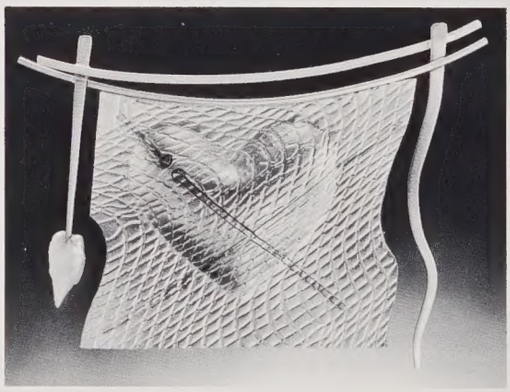

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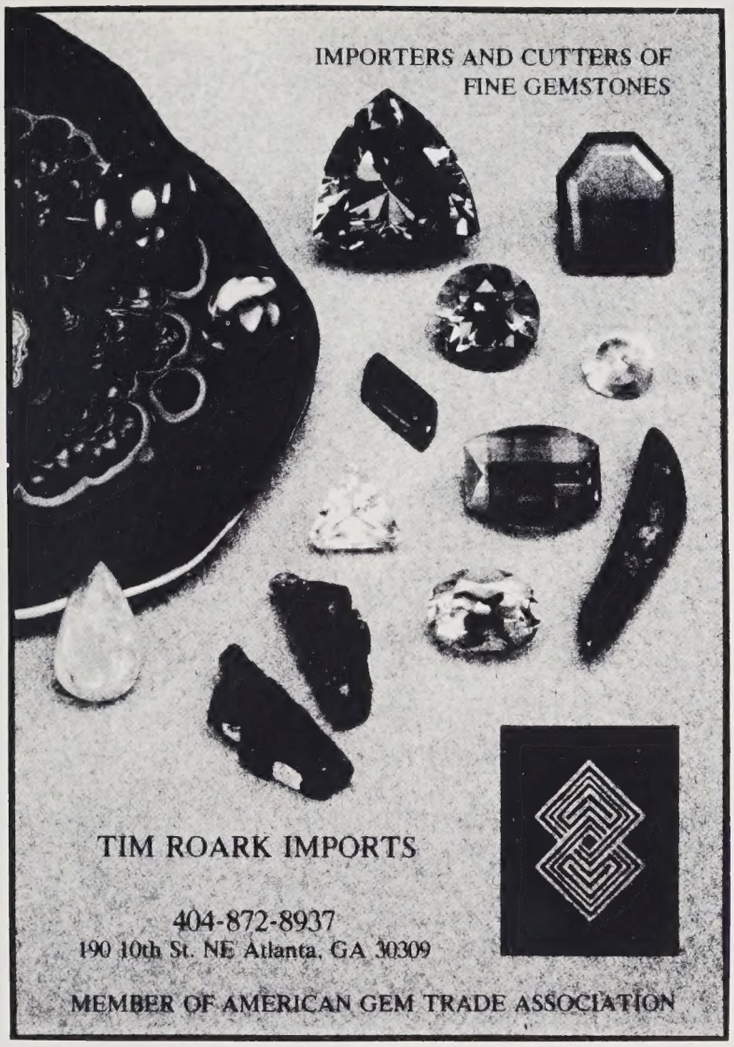

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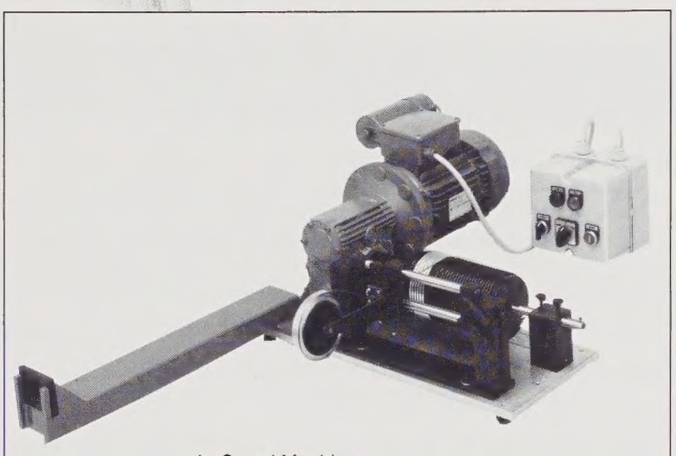

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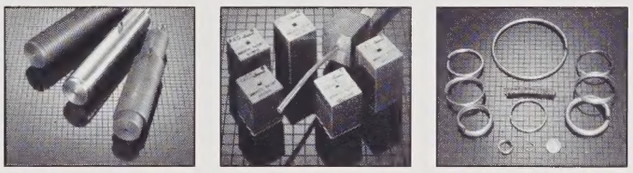

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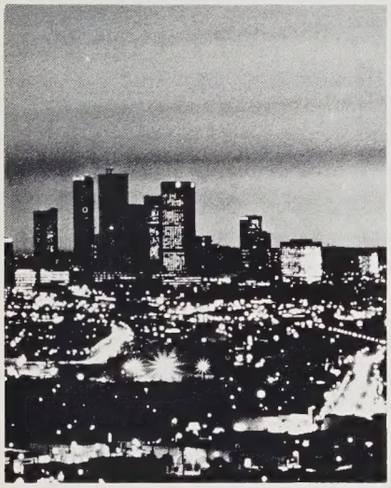

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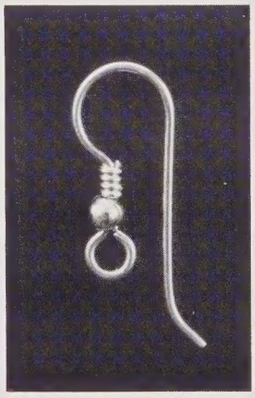

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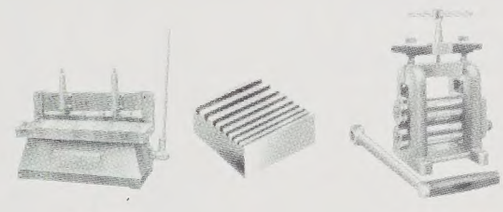
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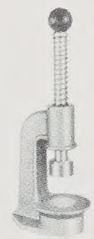

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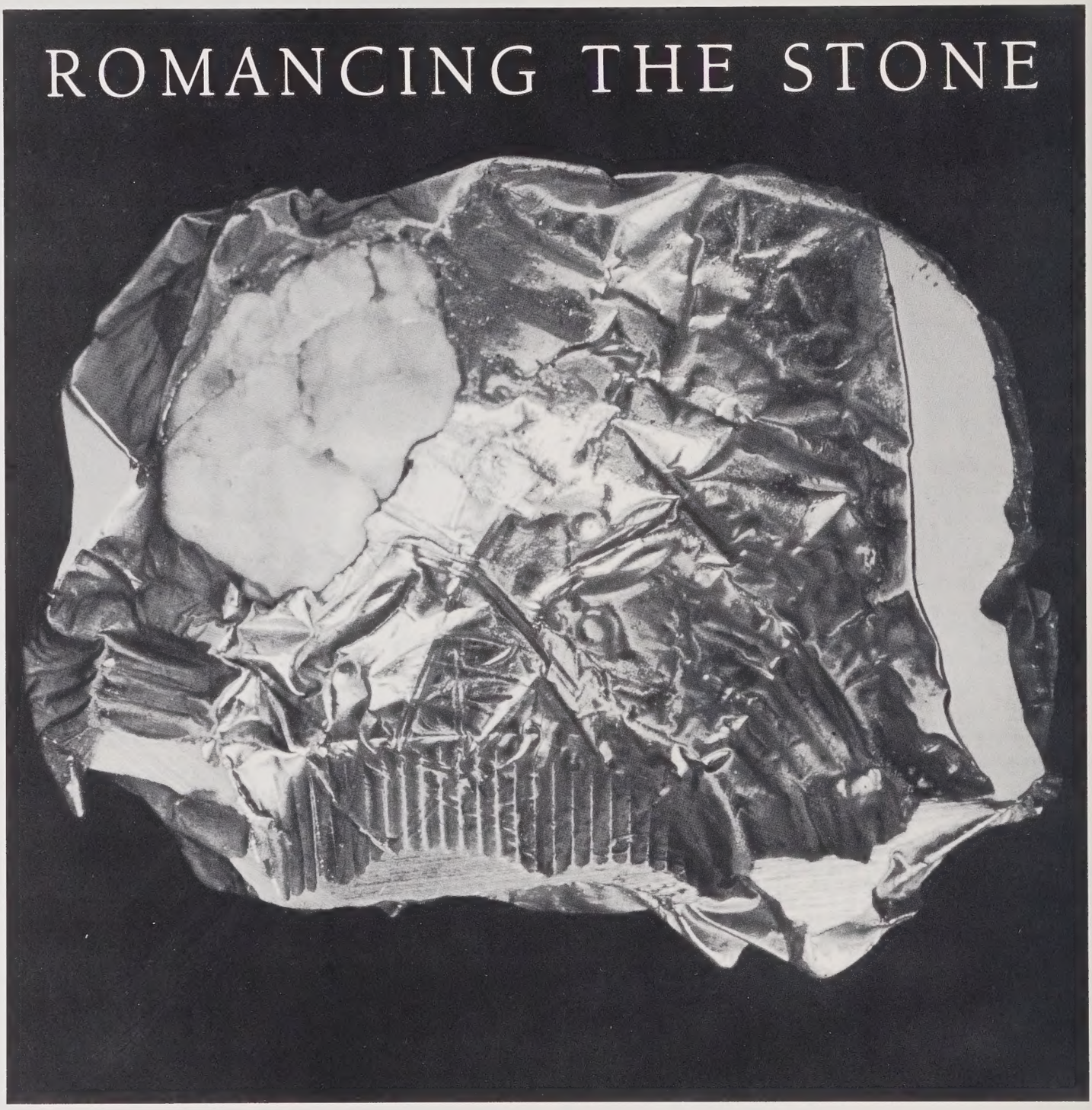

While evaluating a piece of my jewelry, one of my first instructors in metals said to me, "You realize that if you'd mount a stone in this piece you could up its price by 500 to 1000 percent!" I was, as usual, thinking more about the esthetics of the work and found his remark disturbing. I still feel uncomfortable about his comment, though I now know he was right. People love stones in jewelry. There probably isn't anything that makes jewelry more marketable or inflates the price more. As a result, much jewelry in the marketplace is nothing more than a complex arrangement and display of stones, which we've come to associate with status and wealth. There is little design beyond the mechanics of holding it all together.

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MEMBERSHIP
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The Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) was formed in 1970 to promote contemporary gold- and silversmithing. SNAG serves as a forum for the free exchange of ideas in the field.

Technical information, esthetic and educational issues, and other topics of interest to the practitioner and teacher of contemporary metalwork are disseminated by SNAG publications and conferences. Professionals and students, collectors, gallery owners and enthusiasts will all find SNAG interesting and useful. From pure sculpture to production jewelry, SNAG offers information on the entire range of the exciting field of metalsmithing.

SERVICES

Each year, SNAG conducts a conference that attracts jewelers and silversmiths from all over the world. Major figures in the field speak on a multitude of topics. Each conference is held in a different location to allow the widest audience possible access to these lively and stimulating gatherings.

Periodically, SNAG sponsors major exhibitions of contemporary metalwork. In the past, SNAG shows have been mounted at the Renwick Gallery, the St. Paul Museum of Art and the Phoenix Museum of Art. A special exhibition of work by Distinguished Members traveled to major museums in Europe in 1979.

The Society operates a book ordering service, through which important texts on all aspects of the field can be ordered at a reduced price.

SNAG also operates a slide library and rental service, which contains the portfolios of Distinguished Members and other notable metalsmiths. Members can rent or purchase slices at minimal cost.

PUBLICATIONS

Metalsmith is the only magazine in America devoted solely to the metal arts. Prominent jewelers and designers, silversmiths, blacksmiths and sculptors are featured in full-length articles. Process and technique are explored in essays on design and production, materials and equipment. Regular columns by leading authorities discuss the latest gallery shows, newest books and current museum exhibitions.

The *SNAG Newsletter* is published bimonthly and is available to members only. It features timely information on exhibitions, workshops, conferences and job opportunities from all across the U.S. and Canada.

MEMBERSHIP

SNAG offers several types of memberships, each tailored to a specific level of involvement in the field of contemporary metalsmithing.

General Membership is open to everyone and includes subscriptions to *Metalsmith* and the SNAG Newsletter, reduced conference fees, access to all of SNAG's services and full voting privileges.

Distinguished Membership is a special juried category, which is conferred upon members who demonstrate outstanding contribution to the field. Special exhibitions and other privileges are available to these members. This category of membership includes all publications and other advantages described above.

Student Membership is offered at a reduced rate to anyone attending an accredited educational institution. This membership offers all the advantages of a *general membership* but does not carry voting privileges.

Institutional Membership is available for nonprofit organizations like schools and libraries. Institutions receive four issues of *Metalsmith* magazine per year.

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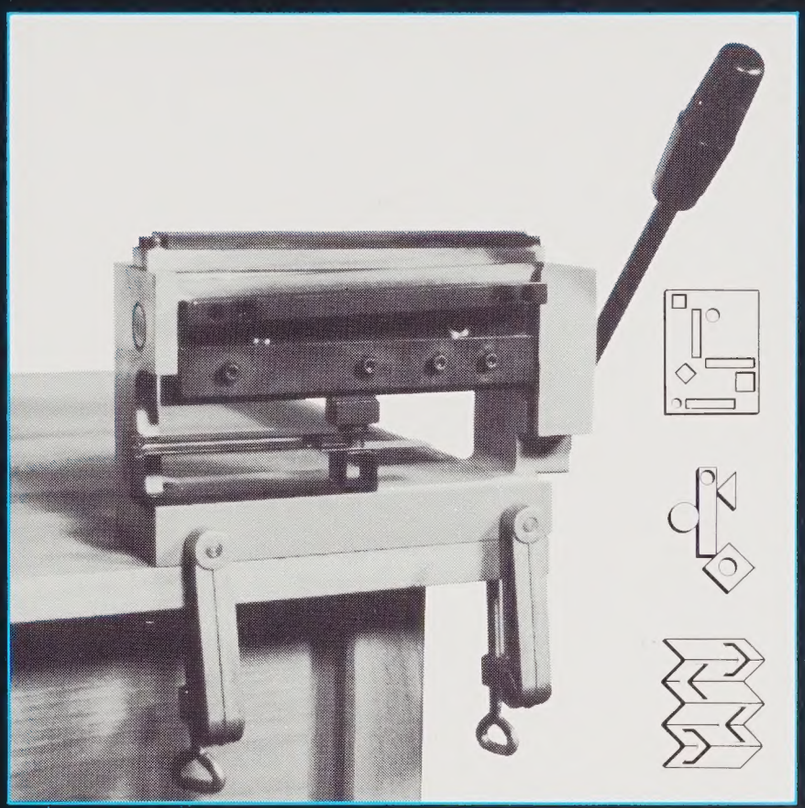

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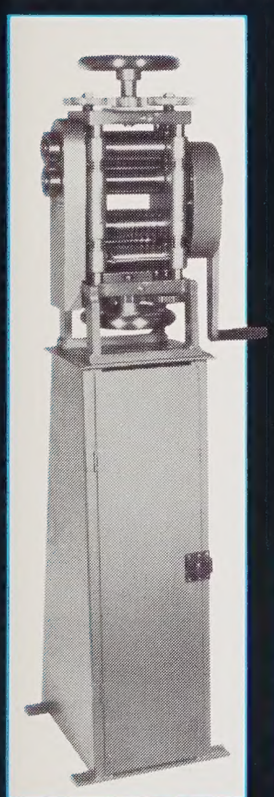

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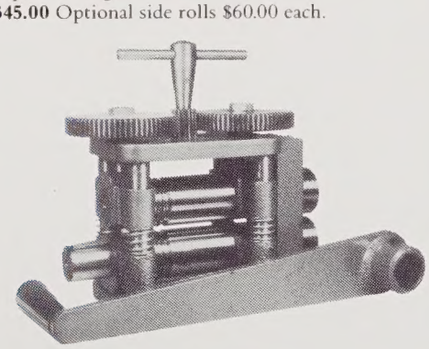

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